Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Which alternative energy do you think would work best in the CNMI: geothermal, OTEC, nuclear, wind, solar, or biomass?

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to cast your vote.

123 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

Impeached

Gov. Rod Blagojevich was thrown out of office Thursday without a single lawmaker coming to his defense.

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Factory Blast

A powerful explosion destroyed a fireworks factory south of Manila on Thursday, killing at least six people.

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Muna: Transmission equipment causing outages. **PAGE 2**
'Bread' experiment tops GTC science fair. **PAGE 3**

Tinian casino project 're-evaluated' due to federalization

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Bridge Investment Group LLC is now re-evaluating its plan to build a $40 million to $50 million casino and condominiums project on Tinian based on the global economic crunch and the federal takeover of CNMI immigration by June.

The firm has halted construction at the project site.

Phillip Mendiola-Long, executive vice president of Bridge Investment Group-CNMI operations, yesterday said the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's regulations excluding China from the list of countries granted a visa waiver to enter the CNMI will have an impact on the project.

"Although we have yet to make a final decision going forward on what, if any, changes will occur to our current business model, we continue to closely monitor both the U.S.

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WITHOUT AUSTERITY FRIDAYS

Govt layoffs may be imminent

> *It's not an option that we relish or look forward to at all. But that's always a possibility. ...It's gotten to the point where major cuts need to be made. The longer we delay it the worse off we'll be.*
>
> —Press secretary Charles Reyes

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno Fitial could use his authority to reduce the government workforce if the Legislature fails to pass a measure reducing the workweek to four days, according to press secretary Charles Reyes.

Reducing the workforce is not something that the governor wants to do, Reyes said, but with a projected decrease in local revenue, such austerity measures must take place.

"It's not an option that we relish or look forward to at all," the press secretary said. "But that's always a possibility. All the governor would have to do is issue those notices to civil

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HOME OF THE OCTOPUS HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
Two students of San Antonio Elementary School walk past a mural on their way to the canteen where the annual Science Fair was held Thursday.

Fitial urged to revoke call center's QC

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Development Authority has endorsed to the governor its recommendation to revoke the qualifying certificate of what was to be the first call center operator on island after the company failed to fulfill its promise to establish the business within a prescribed deadline.

Fitial

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Local

Muna: Transmission equipment causing outages

Recent power outages have been caused by faulty transmission equipment and not a lack of power generation, according to Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive director Antonio Muna.

Some of the hardware that is supposed to isolate areas when an outage occurs is old and exposed to the elements, therefore not working properly, Muna said. The wind is also a factor in the distribution failure.

"So we need to go out there and change the equipment that's faulty and ensure that when problems occur in transmission and distribution it's not finding its way back to the plant," he said.

Muna compared the current situation to a breaker in a house tripping, stopping power from going to that particular area of the house.

"What's happening is out here that particular breaker that's supposed to open to isolate the problem is not happening," he added. "Instead of just isolating that particular area, it's taking down the power of the entire house. We need to ensure components necessary to isolate are there and won't find itself going all the way back to the plant."

Muna said CUC has ordered its annual parts inventory, totaling around half a million dollars. Within that half million should be components to help with the transmission and distribution problems, he said.

Due to a lack of power generation last summer, Saipan was experiencing prolonged brownouts and blackouts. Since September, CUC has been renting emergency generators, adding 15 megawatts of power to the system to help meet the daily island demand. ***(Kristi Eaton)***

USCIS hiring for Application Support Center

In preparation for June 1, when federal immigration laws will come to the CNMI, the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is currently hiring for two positions within the Application Support Center.

The Center, which will be housed in the TSL Plaza, will allow people the ability to get fingerprinted on island as opposed to traveling to Guam. An information officer will also be a part of the support center to help those who might have questions about their status or benefits. The Application Support Center will open sometime between March 1 and June 1.

USCIS is currently accepting applications for a site supervisor and part-time biometrics technician. The staff will be responsible for taking fingerprints and photographs of applicants for

See USCIS on Page 4

Suspected supplier of meth nabbed in buy-bust operation

Police arrested a suspected supplier of methamphetamine or "ice" during a buy-bust operation on Saipan on Sunday.

Zheng Hua Tian, 38, a Chinese, was detained for trafficking of a controlled substance and illegal possession of a controlled substance.

Tian was taken to the Superior Court yesterday for a bail hearing. Associate Judge Ramona V. Manglona imposed a $30,000 cash bail for the defendant's temporary release.

Preliminary hearing was set for Feb. 5 at 9am.

Detective Norman Alvin S. Rasiang stated in his report that the controlled buy-bust operation was conducted by members of the Department of Public Safety's Criminal Investigation Division's Narcotics Unit.

Rasiang said the detectives used a "cooperating defendant" who posed as a buyer.

The "cooperating defendant" was allegedly able to purchase a gram of "ice" worth $500 from Tian at a store's parking lot.

Detectives arrested Tian after the alleged transaction and later on the same day searched his residence in As Lito where the officers claimed to have seized more "ice" and illegal drug paraphernalia. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

'Bread' experiment tops GTC science fair

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The creative study of an 11-year-old student topped yesterday's second annual science competition at the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School, making the entry the lead representative of the school to the islandwide contest of the Public School System.

Fifth-grader Angela Deleon Guerrero was surprised upon learning that she won, saying she never expected it.

She and her younger brother, Miguel Andrei, were first-timers in the competition.

"This is our first year here at GTC…and we're happy to join the contest," she told *Saipan Tribune*. The two were transferees from a private school on island.

Angela's "Bread experiment" garnered the highest mark among 16 qualified entries yesterday.

She said it took her two weeks to prepare for the contest where she conducted an experiment to determine the kind of bread where mold grows the fastest.

"I found out that bread molds grow at varying speeds depending on condition and ingredients," she explains, adding that she started the process by conducting research about molds and breads.

Her brother's entry about the most effective remover of stains was named third best project while Jezreelyn Bulaklak's study on disease prevention was adjudged second top entry.

Two entries were still being assessed yesterday to complete the final list of five official entries to the islandwide contest.

GTC acting principal Charlotte Camacho said over a hundred students from third through sixth grade joined the event where the top three best science projects in each class were selected to compete with other classes.

Out of the 16 qualifiers, only the top five will be named to the PSS' contest where overall winners will compete in the Guam science competition.

"This is our second year… and I can say that it gets better. Students were excited and we have seen strong support from their parents, as what we always want to promote," she said.

There were four categories in yesterday's competition—life, physical, earth and space, and health nutrition and medical science.

Camacho said the mini-science fair is significant in the learning of students as it fosters critical thinking and motivates students to go further in what they have found in their research.

"It opens opportunities for their interests…something they may pursue in the future like biologists and scientists," she said.

The acting principal admitted that students' involvement in science events was among the areas cited by the accreditation commission to GTC.

This is why a "learning fair" for parents will be the school's next major event in March.

Yesterday's competition was judged by Reina Camacho from Division of Environmental Quality and archeologists Randy Harper and Marlene Swift.

WHAT SUBSTANCE IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE IN REMOVING STAINS?
Will the most expensive toothpaste be the most effective for removing stains?
RESULTS

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
Miguel Andrei Deleon Guerrero's entry about the most effective remover of stains was named third best project at the Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary School science fair.

BIRTHDAY SHOUT-OUT CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Happy second birthday to Charianne Patreese Cabrera Dabney, who is celebrating her special day in Alabama. We love and miss you and pray that you will have many more blessings in the years to come. Greetings come from Kathryn, Kylie, Grand Dad, Mom Mom, auntie Pennie and all the family back home on Saipan.

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Pursuant to 4 CMC, Div. 7, Section 7306 (i) of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Oceania Insurance Corporation is making its intention known of increasing the company's paid-up capital and surplus in accordance with this statute.

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Villagomez inks proclamation for DOC officers, staff

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez was at the Department of Corrections yesterday afternoon to sign a proclamation declaring Feb. 1 to 7 as Correctional Officers and Employees Week.

Villagomez said the duties of DOC officers and employees have become increasingly complex, very demanding and challenging, and often do not receive the recognition they deserve.

"It is appropriate that we honor the many contributions and accomplishments made by these men and women of the Department of Corrections," said the lieutenant governor in the proclamation.

The signing was held in front of the Vicente Seman Building or the Adult Correctional Facility in Susupe.

At the ceremony, Corrections Officer 3 Stanley Ngircheungel was awarded DOC's "Employee of the Year."

"I'm surprised because I don't know about this," said Ngircheungel, who has been working with DOC for almost nine years now. "I'm very proud that they chose me to be the Employee of the Year."

Villagomez said DOC officers and employees play a vital role in providing effective and efficient correctional services and programs to inmates.

He said DOC officers and employees safeguard the public by ensuring that no escapes, disturbances or riots occur within the facility "by providing inmates with an environment that meets their security needs and are treated humanely."

FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Department of Corrections Commissioner Lino Tenorio, in white long sleeved shirt, poses with some Corrections officers during yesterday's proclamation signing for Correctional officers and employees week.

DOC Commissioner Lino Tenorio said the ceremony is actually something that entails special recognition for DOC officers and staff for the things that they have been doing the past several years.

"This is not to say that everything is perfect. But for the most part, everybody really put in their time and effort to make this department the way it is. It is one of the most highly looked up to department because the officers are just so sharp," Tenorio said.

He noted that the officers and staff have been complying with the department's standard operating procedures.

"After several years of hard work in trying to bring this facility, getting the inmates here so we can get going and meet the consent decree issues, the whole purpose is to thank and recognize the officers for the job they have done," the commissioner said.

Among the guests at the ceremony were Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela and Superior Court associate judge David A. Wiseman.

USCIS

From Page 2

immigration benefits.

Those contracted for the job will work with Northrup Grumman, the company that manages the ASC contract. They will work closely with USCIS federal employees.

All applicants must be U.S. citizens, either by birth or naturalization and submit to a credit check and drug screening.

To apply, visit: http://careers.northropgrumman.com

- Click on "Job Search"
- For the Site Supervisor position, enter "72414" in "Keywords"
- For the Part-time Biometrics Technician position, enter "72609" in "Keywords" ***(Kristi Eaton)***

FITIAL

From Page 1

CDA economic development analyst Carline Sablan confirmed with *Saipan Tribune* that they expect Gov. Benigno R. Fitial to approve the recommendation.

The recommendation was submitted last Dec. 22 and the chief executive has until Feb. 4 to act on it.

"The major reason: they were not in compliance with the requirement that the call center would be established within two years of issuance of their qualifying certificate," Sablan said, adding that the company's QC expired Feb. 23, 2008.

Although We Manage Call Inc., operator of the proposed call center, has the option to renew or ask for an extension, the agency official said its owners opted not to do so.

"They were informed about this revocation proposal, but we have not heard from them," she said.

CDA earlier admitted that during inspections and visits, "no preparation" was seen on the proposed location of the business—the seventh floor of the former Nauru Building.

We Manage Call Inc. is a partnership between Erick Van Der Maas and his Los Angeles-based business associate Hans Smit, who supposedly owns 65 percent of the call center.

Their proposed business was earlier projected to bring a cash flow of $98 million over 10 years to the CNMI.

As part of their commitment, they purchased the former Nauru Building in Susupe and later renamed it Marianas Business Plaza, which is now home to a number of business renters.

It also planned to employ up to 200 people of which 90 percent are local residents.

Based on that plan, it will begin operation with 30 people in December 2005. The number was projected to increase to 50 by June 2006 and 100 by end of 2007. By middle of 2007, it was projected to employ 150 staff. Beginning 2008, its workforce was projected to increase to 200 or more.

Over 10 years, there will be $21.4 million in accumulated payroll and total employee income tax benefits to the CNMI will amount to some $900,000 based on its projection.

With a supposed initial capital of $2 million, the business was granted the government tax break and abatement on Feb. 23, 2005.

It later postponed developments and preparation for the business, citing two major factors: minimum wage and federalization.

The government's qualifying certificate program grants various tax incentives of up to 100 percent in tax rebates for 25 years to investors who build, expand, and operate commercial projects in the CNMI.

CDA also recommended revocation of Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino's qualifying certificate for noncompliance with the requirements, including tax issues, environmental concerns, and violations of some federal and local laws.

The chief executive is also expected to make the decision soon.

Once revoked, the QCs will be classified as invalid or inactive by the agency.

Out of the 13 beneficiaries since the program's inception in 2000, only seven certificates are active at present.

GOVT

From Page 1

service employees pursuant to the rules and laws and regulations. And he could essentially force layoffs. But I think the better solution is to have this compromise and have the Legislature support these proposed austerity measures."

Fitial can implement the austerity measure for contract employees but civil service employees do have more legal protection, Reyes said.

"Our Attorney General's Office has been looking into it. There are some different views on that. I think the safest course is to get legislative sanction, if at possible. But the governor does have certain powers, whether that falls under powers of the Constitution, I think a case can be made. Of course, the courts may not see it that way and it's never been done before, but we've never seen a situation like this before."

The administration's bill, currently in draft form, calls for a 64-hour pay period with workers' salaries reduced accordingly and six unpaid holidays for the rest of the fiscal year. Essential departments, such as health, education and public safety, would be exempted.

"It's gotten to the point where major cuts need to be made. The longer we delay it the worse off we'll be," Reyes said.

In December, when Fitial vetoed the Legislature's initial $165.4 million budget—citing an $8.7 million drop in projected revenue—he urged the House and Senate to implement austerity Fridays and non-paid holidays. After he vetoed the budget, Fitial slashed government spending across the board by 5.5 percent for the rest of the fiscal year.

Fitial has until Feb. 10 to approve, line item veto or veto the Legislature's revised $156.76 million budget. The latest proposed budget does not include austerity Fridays and non-paid holidays; instead, it reduces the original department spending levels proportionately to Fitial's 5.5 percent reduction. The $156.76 million budget allows for 4,021 full time employees.

The administration realizes enacting austerity Fridays is a very politically unpopular decision, press secretary Reyes said. "Unfortunately," he added, "the financial situation warrants this type of action and it's very difficult."

Reyes noted that the Legislature has imposed austerity Fridays in the past. In 2006, Public Law 15-24 was passed, reducing the government pay period to 72 hours for fiscal year 2007.

"Remember, they did approve it once before and that provision expired and it was never renewed," Reyes said. "So it's possible if the Legislature gets all the facts and really appreciates the situation they may go ahead and do something," he said, adding that a compromise could also take place.

"They may not go all the way, buts it's possible they may have no other choice but provide some sort of relief."

Rep. Oscar Babauta, who was House Speaker when PL 15-24 was passed, said savings were realized during fiscal year 2007, and he would support a similar bill.

"This will continue to save jobs in government and the government will still be able to provide basic services," he said.

It's not something that anybody wants to do, he added, but it must be done.

"Many employees—as hard as it is to swallow—would rather have reduced hours than nothing at all," he said, adding that even the private sector is hurting because of the economic downturn.

Fitial does not want to realize a deficit while he is governor, Babauta said, a statement echoed by Reyes.

"Last year we received a bit of windfall from the cover over funds that allowed us to meet the deficit, the shortfall," Reyes said, referring to the $18 million dollars the CNMI received from the federal government, eliminating the fiscal year 2008 deficit. "This year we don't expect any sort of revenue and expect revenue to go down even further."

Rep. Ramon Tetuteb said he has reservations about re-implementing austerity Fridays. He's concerned, he said, because the administration recommends the measure yet continues to hire employees.

TINIAN

From Page 1

DHS regulatory position and the CNMI government's lawsuit against the United States. The results of which will have a direct impact on our business model going forward," Mendiola-Long told *Saipan Tribune.*

He said construction on the Bridge Investment project began but "we have halted progress until a clear and final U.S. Immigration regulatory environment can be determined."

Bridge Investment secured a license to operate a casino on Tinian in 2005. It earlier planned to build a $200 million project on Tinian, but scaled it down to $40 million-$50 million in early 2008.

Bridge Investment's project, called Tinian Oceanview Resort and Casino, would have 396 total rooms—268 declared condominium units and 128 hotel rooms—and 30,000 square feet of casino/banquet area.

Press secretary Charles P. Reyes Jr. said the Bridge Investment project shows that the CNMI can attract investment capital if only the federal government allows it reasonable access to workers, tourists, investors and customers.

"For the CNMI economy to recover, the federal government must amend current federal policies and provide economic relief," he said.

Bridge Investment projects to create 936 new jobs on Tinian.

Through the project, it will be able to contribute an average of $706,800 in total monthly gaming tax revenue for Tinian, which still does not include increased employee fees, gaming device fees and service industry license fees, among other things. This represents a 228-percent increase in the Tinian gaming tax.

Because of the investment, Bridge Investment projects $92 million in annual Tinian tourist revenue.

But Mendiola-Long said these "economic forecasts are based only on continued access to the China tourist market and any subsequent changes to the ease of access to that market will negatively impact these current projections."

The Marianas Visitors Authority earlier said the CNMI stands to lose $183 million in economic opportunities as a result of the federalization of local immigration in June and the loss of the Chinese and Russian tourists.

Tinian, which is allowed to have five casinos and relies heavily on Chinese tourists, has only one operating casino—the Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino.

Three licenses have been issued to different sets of investors to put up a casino, and Bridge Investment is among them. It secured a license in 2005. It is the only one that has started, then halted, construction.

It hired the China-based Tianyuan Construction Group to build the project on 75,000 square feet of land that the company has leased for 55 years.

The other two investors are the Marianas Resort Development Corp., which plans to build a $300 million Matua Bay Resort, and Neo Gold Wings Paradise Saipan Corp. which plans to construct a $200 million hotel-casino.

CNMI firefighters conduct skills training during the weeklong Emergency Medical Technician's basic refresher course at the Kagman Community Center.
FERDIE DE LA TORRE

Visiting EMS trainers impressed with local firefighters' abilities

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Three visiting Emergency Medical Services trainers from the U.S. mainland are all praises over local firefighters' knowledge in EMS components.

David Bower, a program director for Emergency Medical Services for Children at the University of South Dakota, said Thursday that he and fellow EMS trainers—Dan Jones and Emy Marsh—are very impressed at both the dedication and knowledge of local firefighters.

"They've been working very hard and we're very confident that all of them will be able to get their national certification," said Bower in an interview with *Saipan Tribune* at the Kagman Community Center.

The visiting trainers have been conducting emergency medical technician's basic refresher course for the CNMI's firefighters at the Kagman Community Center since Monday. The training ended yesterday, Friday.

Bower said they're here to help the local EMS personnel meet national certification so that their level of training matches with the rest of the nation. "So they know that their training is as good as anywhere else in the mainland in the states. They meet the same level of training," he said.

Bower pointed out that the intent of the training is to provide a higher level of care for patients in the CNMI.

Fire Division Operations chief Fire Captain Tom Manglona said the training is a minimum of 24 hours, but they can extend up to 40 hours if needed.

Manglona said there are 80 participating firefighters from Saipan, 15 from Tinian, and 10 from Rota.

"Today we're doing our EMI basic refresher course for our seasoned firefighters as part of our training calendar for 2009. We're getting our guys updated as far as their EMT recertification is concerned," he said.

On Thursday, the firefighters conducted practical skills testing.

"Once these are all set and done, we are giving the guys an opportunity to actually take the National Registry EMT exam. It is a national certification exam for EMS personnel," Manglona said.

The training, he said, can be considered preparation for the local firefighters to take the National Registry EMT's exam.

"Everybody will have an opportunity to be certified. We do this every two years—recertification as EMTs," Manglona said.

EMTS have to recertify every two years and they also have to be recertified with the CPR basic life support certification from the American Heart Association.

"We got some trainers that are assisting us here from the EMS for Children and the School of EMS," said Manglona, referring to Bower's group.

Manglona said the training is very important because it gives them an opportunity to update their skills and go over any new knowledge as far as the pre-hospital care is concerned.

"At the same time, the training gives our guys an opportunity to get back into the classroom and talk about their experiences out in the field and how we can better improve our response and patient care management in the field," said the Fire captain.

Rota casino regs now in effect

The rules and regulations for the casino industry on the island of Rota, published in the Commonwealth Registrar on Dec. 22, 2008, are now in effect, according to a statement issued yesterday by the Rota Casino Gaming Commission.

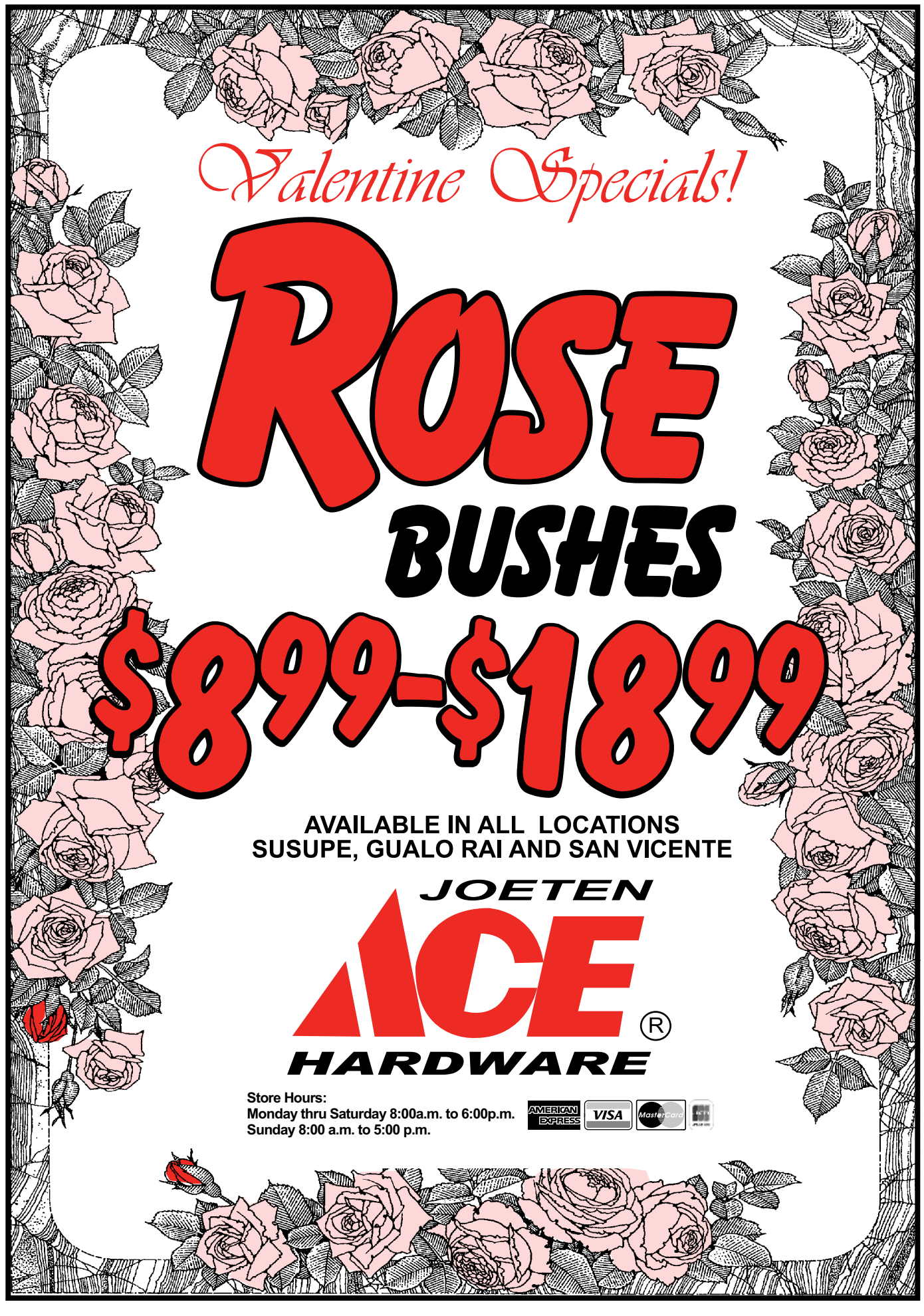
The rules and regulations provide adequate and systematic procedure on investigation and enforcement, which are essential to maintain the integrity of the casino industry on the island, according to the commission.

The Commissioners' goal "was to ensure that the rules and regulations are attractive to potential investors and conducive to the operation of casino."

Consistent with the Rota Casino Act of 2007, it further provides specific guidance to monitor and safeguard the casino industry and to protect the interest of the public.

The commission is now in the process of creating a Web site that would provide the public, potential investors, and tourists essential information about the casino industry and other investments on Rota. The commission expects the Web site to be completed in "the very near future."

A copy of the rules and regulations are available at the Commonwealth Registrar and with the Commission, which could be requested by contacting (670) 532-7242 or via e-mail at rotacommission@gmail.com. ***(PR)***



Opinion

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EDITORIAL

The Afghan challenge

For years, Democrats excoriated the Bush administration for not devoting sufficient resources to Afghanistan. But now that Barack Obama has taken office, some seem to be having second thoughts. "Our original goal was to go in there and take on al-Qaida. ... It was not to adopt the 51st state of the United States," said Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., the new chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Mr. Kerry pioneered the Democratic argument to send more troops during his own presidential campaign in 2004. Now he says "the parallels" to Vietnam "just really keep leaping out in so many different ways."

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates seconded that skepticism at a congressional hearing on Tuesday. "If we set ourselves the objective of creating some sort of Central Asian Valhalla over there, we will lose," he said, "because nobody in the world has that kind of time, patience and money, to be honest."

We're happy to agree that Afghanistan should not become the 51st state, or Valhalla—but we're not sure who or what Mr. Kerry and Mr. Gates have in mind. So far as we know, the American objective in Afghanistan since 2002 has been pretty much what Mr. Gates says it should be: "an Afghan people who do not provide a safe haven for al-Qaida, who reject the rule of the Taliban and support the legitimate government they have elected and in which they have a stake."

The problem, as Mr. Gates acknowledged, is that meeting that aim necessitates such tasks as stabilizing western Pakistan, rooting out the opium trade, vastly expanding the Afghan army and constructing a workable legal system. That, in turn, will require more money, more troops, many more years of commitment—and higher American casualties.

"Bottom line is, it's going to be tough, it's going to be difficult, in many ways harder than Iraq," Sen. Lindsey O. Graham, R-S.C., put it to Mr. Gates. "Do you agree with that?" "Yes," the secretary responded.

See THE on Next Page

COMING SOON TO SOME OBSCURE CABLE CHANNEL...
HAIR WARS
VS.
JOHN 'PRETTY BOY' EDWARDS
BLOW-DRIED AND READY FOR BATTLE!
TUNE IN TO FIND OUT WHICH HAIRSTYLE BELONGS TO THE MORE WASHED-UP POLITICIAN!
ROD 'HELMET HEAD' BLAGOJEVICH
STUBBORN AND DEFIANT TO THE END!
KOTERBA
OMAHA WORLD-HERALD

The Darwins' marriage of science, religion

By DEBORAH HEILIGMAN
SPECIAL TO THE LOS ANGELES TIMES

On Jan. 29, 1839, in the little chapel in the English village of Maer, a religious 30-year-old woman named Emma Wedgwood put on a green silk dress and got married. She believed firmly in a heaven and a hell. And she believed you had to accept God to go to heaven. She married Charles Darwin.

As we head into a new era for a country that has struggled for too long with the marriage of science and religion, we should take a look at the marriage of Emma and Charles Darwin.

When Charles came home in 1836 from his five-year voyage around the world, which included the visit to the Galapagos Islands, he was already seeing life and creation in a new way. And as he courted Emma, he also was secretly scribbling notes about a new idea, his theory of evolution, in leather-bound notebooks marked "private."

He knew that his view of creation would rock the faith of Emma and almost everyone in England, and as he prepared to propose to her, he agonized. Charles' father advised him to keep his mouth shut. "Conceal your doubts," he warned.

But Charles couldn't do that. He was too honest. He told Emma of his doubts about the veracity of the Bible and of his growing skepticism about religion.

Emma said she would marry him anyway. She prized his candor, and she knew he was a good and moral man. But in a letter she sent him soon after their engagement, she told him that she was sad that "our opinions on the most important subject should differ widely."

This was the first of several letters about religion that Emma wrote to Charles during their lives. She urged him not to close the door on faith. And she shared her fears that they would be separated for eternity. Charles always listened to what she had to say, and they talked about the problem. He kept each letter close. He wrote on one of them, "When I am dead, know that many times, I have kissed and cryed over this. C.D." On another he wrote, simply, "God bless you."

Charles and Emma had 10 children together. Three of the children died; the death of their beloved 10-year-old daughter, Annie, broke their hearts. That loss could have driven them apart forever. It strengthened Emma's faith and all but closed the door on God for Charles. But they fought for their marriage. The day after Annie died, Emma wrote to Charles, "You must remember that you are my prime treasure (and always have been)."

Darwin worked for decades on his theory. He tried to make his argument as strong and solid as possible, and he also aimed not to offend. He showed Emma drafts, and he worked harder on a passage when she wrote in the margin, "a great assumption."

In 1859, as he finally readied "The Origin of Species" for publication, he gave the manuscript to Emma. She was always his best and most trusted editor. As she read the argument that essentially took God out of creation, she did not ask Charles to soften it at all. In fact, she helped him strengthen his book by making the language clearer. She also cleaned up his spelling and punctuation.

Through the years, the two continued to talk and listen to each other about this "most important subject," as Emma called it. She encouraged him not to approach religion in the same way he approached science. What leads to faith, she said, is "feeling, not reasoning."

After he became famous, people often wrote to the sage of Down House and asked him what he believed about God. Usually Darwin demurred. And he echoed Emma. He said his views were of "no consequence to anyone except myself" and that the question of religion was for theologians, not for scientists. Still, he often pointed to his friend, the American botanist Asa Gray, who was both an evolutionist and a theist.

Charles and Emma were married for 43 years. In his last years, Charles renewed a fascination with worms and wrote "The Formation of Vegetable Mold Through the Action of Worms With Observations on Their Habits," a best-seller in its day. Emma, never much interested in science, found herself joining him in his obsession. They spent hours together watching the worms in the garden of Down House, side by side.

Although they never were able to see eye-to-eye on the question of religion and God, they were able to reach their hands across the gulf. In the end, each of them accepted and, it seems, truly understood what the other believed.

If it is a sign of intelligence to be able to hold two opposite thoughts or opinions in your head, then it is a mark of a successful marriage to be able to truly see the other person's point of view. This is also the mark of a successful society.

There is an apocryphal story that Darwin accepted God on his deathbed. The true story is this: When he suffered his last and fatal heart attack, Charles told Emma that he was "not the least afraid of death."

And as he slipped away, he told her, "Remember what a good wife you have been to me."

Emma held Charles in her arms as he died.

Heiligman is the author of Charles and Emma: The Darwins' Leap of Faith.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, Century Insurance Building, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Voices from afar on presidential policies

(c) 2009, Los Angeles Times

Recently, a Los Angeles Times editorial series explored the extent to which U.S. leadership in the world suffered during the last eight years and what steps the new president should take to repair it. In conjunction with those editorials, the Times asked a variety of people around the world to answer two questions: How did the foreign policy of President George W. Bush's administration affect them and their countries? And what are their hopes for the administration of President Barack Obama? What follows are edited transcripts of their answers.

ASUNTA WAGURA

Nairobi, Kenya

Before Pepfar (the $18 billion President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, launched in 2003), access to treatment for Kenyans was a far-away dream. Drugs were too expensive. We were burying so many people. Now treatment is a reality.

I started taking Pepfar drugs in 2006. I don't think I would have attempted to have my baby if not for Pepfar. They gave me the right advice, told me which drug regime to take, what to give my baby after birth. It helped prevent transmission to my baby. (Wagura gave birth to an HIV-negative boy in 2006.) The program is not just about drugs. It's about empowering people to live their lives.

I wasn't surprised when Bush created the program. I met with him and (former British Prime Minister Tony) Blair. There were several AIDS activists there, and we outlined what was needed for Africa. Shortly after that, he launched the program.

I think Obama will continue what Bush started. We are a little worried that (with the global financial crisis) the kitty might go down. We don't have unrealistic expectations of special favors, but our prayer is that, when it comes to these life-saving treatments, the U.S. has a sustainable plan to finish what was started.

—Wagura, an AIDS activist and executive director of Kenya Network of Women, has AIDS/HIV.

IVAN MARCHUK

Moscow

President Bush was not subtle. He considered every corner of the world a zone of U.S. interests, designated various countries as enemies of the United States and declared wars on them as easily as blowing his nose. In the process, Bush made Russia show her teeth and become more authoritarian in response. Back in the 1980s, the Soviet Union's war in Afghanistan destroyed our country. But it appears that Bush is incapable of drawing any lessons from history. The endless wars in Iraq and Afghanistan sucked billions of dollars out of the U.S. economy, basically sucking it bloodless. The plunge the U.S. economy took brought down the rest of the world, and Russia is no exception.

The fact that we've reduced salaries in our company and cut personnel by five times in the last few months can be largely attributed, among other things, to the stupid blunders of the Bush administration. Our main investor thinks housing construction will not be a very promising business in the foreseeable future and may cut his investments in our projects altogether. I don't have a personal grudge against Bush. But I think his contribution to unleashing the current world crisis shouldn't be underestimated.

I pin big hopes on Obama's administration. I think Obama should concentrate on finding ways to mend the U.S. economy. I have a feeling he and his team have a plan to do it fast. We'll be watching their efforts with great attention, and, if they are successful, I think Russia will copy their methods.Obama should try to mend the utterly rotten relationship with Russia. If the United States wants Russia to be more democratic, it should do its best to make Russia an ally instead of turning it into an enemy, as the Bush administration managed to do. Many people in Russia now look to Obama with hope.

—Marchuk, 51, is a Russian businessman and strategic planning manager for the Russian construction company Glavmosstoi.

RAAD RASHEED KHAFAJI

Baghdad

On a personal level, President Bush was good for me. During Saddam's time, my personal future was uncertain. My future, as well as my family's future, was threatened. I was forced to leave Iraq in 1991. It was because of the embargo, Saddam's foreign policies. He was not going along with the international community and waged wars in the region with neighboring countries. President Bush presented a hope and new vision.

My economic situation has changed. I am back inside my country. I feel that I can live within the means that anyone from the middle class dreamed of having, like owning a house, a car, sending my children to schools, buying them new clothes for special occasions. I can arrange a picnic with them!

My relationship with society is different from what it was when Iraq was under the control of one political party. I had felt isolated and reclusive. You had to keep silent and not participate in public life to avoid any mistake. It was not possible for me to study for a master's degree, because if somebody forwarded his papers for that, the security and the party associations would send for personal and security information about that person, and that was enough to create problems. Now I have this chance, although it is late.

The Americans were hasty on the issue of democracy. Things differ in countries undergoing change like Iraq. Here, justice must be achieved first, and then democracy. The priorities of the American project, I think, are not convenient for a country like Iraq, which has ethnicities, religions and sects, and people who consider themselves marginalized. The largest sect in Iraq, the Shiites, mixed religion with politics. The Americans didn't know with whom they were dealing. They didn't know which elites were influential. It seemed as if the Americans came to support those politicians who were religious more than those who were secular. This caused confusion. President Obama can aid the economic situation. If there is improvement in the economy, the political process will witness improvement.

What I want from the new administration is openness in its relationship with Iraq and the neighboring countries. Bush's administration sought tension between Iraq and its neighboring countries. We want to see more openness. The new administration should understand that Iran has the right to seek a regional role in the area. Iran must be a player (not necessarily influential) among the regional powers in the area. President Obama should shape a relationship with the countries Bush considered rogue.

But America must remain in Iraq for at least 10 or 15 years. Iraq is not capable of managing its affairs without American support.

—Khafaji, 45, is a Shiite and is studying for a master's degree in Arabic literature. He returned to Iraq in 2001 after a decade abroad.

BRAHMA CHELLANEY

New Delhi

The public perception in India is that Bush has had a real positive impact in the transformation of U.S.-India relations, which is true. But he leaves wreckage stretching from Iran to Pakistan to Afghanistan that will cost India dearly. The entire region, because of the Bush doctrine, is now a contiguous arc of volatility. This will exact a heavy cost regionally and internally. The attack on Mumbai that India suffered is one such follow-up cost from the mess Bush leaves. Personally, I feel great relief at his departure. He has caused such damage to U.S. interests, it will take a long time to recover. Taking over will not be easy. The economy is in shambles; you have two raging wars. I wish Obama all the luck.

The new president needs to have more engagement with Iran. He needs to bear in mind that the surge he has planned for Afghanistan comes too late in the day. Seven years of military intervention has created a Pashtun backlash. The U.S.-India relationship is set to grow closer no matter who's in the White House; the problem is with the countries around India. In addition to Pakistan, you see the isolation of Burma (Myanmar). I hope Obama's foreign policy on China doesn't brush human rights under the rug, as Bush did. Bush showed up at the Beijing Olympics as though nothing had happened. I hope Obama's stance is more principled. A principled stand sets a standard for everyone.

—Chellaney is a strategic-affairs specialist at the Center for Policy Research.

FAWZI ABDULLAH NAIF

Ramadi, Iraq

My whole life changed because of Bush's policy in Iraq. I was a brigadier general in the army. I had my guards. My social life was different. I was shaving my beard every day, while now it's every five or six days. My clothes were completely different. Now, I seldom iron my clothes. I am getting a pension that is not enough for my family requirements. I am doing nothing. I chose my life in the military, but I am forced to live this life now.

Iraq was one of the strongest countries in the region; now it is occupied. It is almost divided. The government is not so strong as to control all parts of the country. Bush destroyed everything in Iraq, all walks of life. He had not done anything good for Iraq. He came to Iraq for oil and protection of Israel. The democracy they are talking about is just chaos. There is no respect for others' opinions. It is a democracy of killings.

What I want from the new president is to withdraw the foreign troops from Iraq and to reinstate the old Iraqi army to control the borders. I also want the federalism idea to be canceled.

—Naif, 53, was a brigadier general in the old Iraqi army.

NASRINE SOUTEDEH

Iran

I was summoned to the revolutionary court last summer. My interrogator accused me of contacting foreigners and Iranians based abroad. My interrogator asked me why I did an interview with Voice of America and whether I had been paid for the interviews. I was not paid by VOA, though it is not a crime to be paid. But if they could have proved that I had been paid, I would have been put in jail.

Recently, when I was awarded an Italian human-rights prize, I was forbidden to go out of the country to pick up my award. The reason was because of hostile relations with the U.S. and the West. There is no chance for any peaceful debate, and all civil-society activists are considered suspect as long as these hostile relations with the U.S. exist.

Any hostile or reconciliatory gestures between the U.S. and Iran directly impact the political space in our society. Activists in Iran, therefore, welcome establishing an ambience of peace and reconciliation between Iran and the U.S. It will be conducive to growing civic dialogue, wisdom and rationality in our society.

I have a dream that if both sides come to the negotiating table based on goodwill, reconciliation and peaceful-mindedness, then civil-society activists would be under less pressure in Iran. In such a case, human-rights activists here could get in touch with American counterparts without fear, in contrast to now, when any contact by Iranian civic activists with America is regarded as a crime by the government.

—Soutedeh is an Iranian human-rights lawyer.

TERESA CAMPOS

Caracas, Venezuela

Bush was horrible. We all thought he did a bad job, made bad decisions. He killed a lot of innocent people in Iraq, for what? With the excuse there were weapons there, and then couldn't admit his mistake when there were none. He wiped out a lot of people and also the ancient Babylonian culture. Obama should think more about his own country. Of course, he has to pay attention to international affairs, but he should think more of his own people, about their health, housing, drugs and delinquency, the social problems, all the things that Bush left to one side. Bush was the worst.

—Campos, the mother of three boys, is an architect and set designer for television productions.

Interviews were conducted by Edmund Sanders in Nairobi, Sergei L. Loiko in Moscow, Raheem Salman in Baghdad, Mark Magnier in New Delhi, Ramin Mostaghim in Tehran and Chris Kraul in Caracas.

THE

From Page 6

So why make it sound as if the Obama administration is scaling back U.S. ambitions? Part of this may be pure politics, to assure the anti-war left—not to mention other Americans—that the United States is not about to follow Russia and Britain into an Afghan quagmire. Yet the new administration, and supporters such as Mr. Kerry, ought to recognize a greater political need, which is to make clear to the country that the war against terrorism—whatever it is now called—did not end on Jan. 20 and that Afghanistan in particular will require years more patience and sacrifice to get right.

The way to avoid a quagmire is not to hold back on U.S. military reinforcements or development aid but to assemble a national civil-military plan that integrates war-fighting with reconstruction and political reconciliation. As Sen. Joseph I. Lieberman, I-Conn., points out, such a plan was the foundation of the U.S. recovery in Iraq, but the model has never been applied in Afghanistan. That's largely because the United States must share authority with some 40 allies, many of which place strict limits on what their troops may do, insist on managing their own development programs, or both. The Afghan government of President Hamid Karzai, mired in corruption and increasingly at odds with U.S. commanders, is also not on board.

Afghanistan doesn't need to become the 51st state, but it does need a single, coherent, integrated plan to become a state strong enough to resist the Taliban and al-Qaida. Creating one will require some aggressive diplomacy and maybe a little political china-breaking. That's something for which the State Department's new envoy to the region, Richard C. Holbrooke, is known. But low-balling the scale of the challenge, or the costs it may incur, won't help.

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Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼78°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°

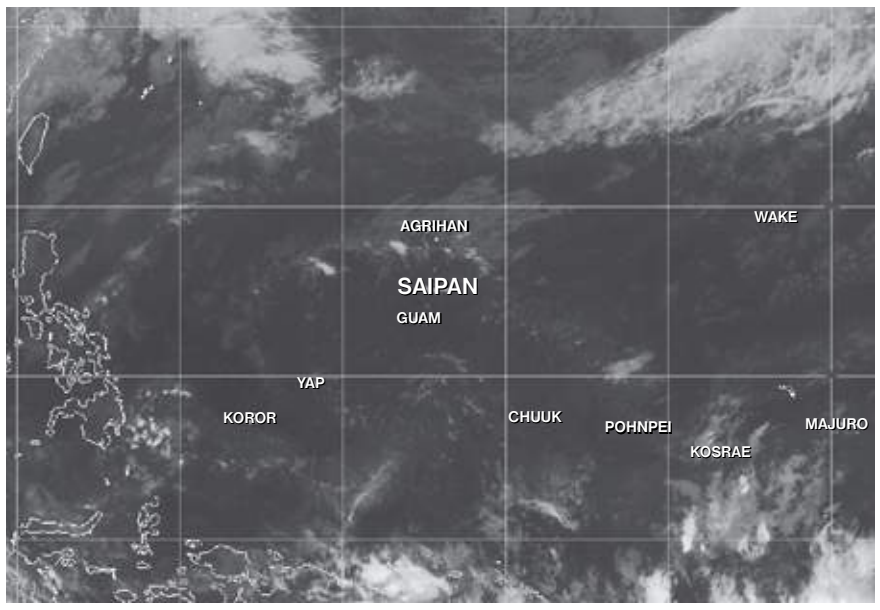
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Showers	▲83	▼76
Palau	Mostly Sunny	▲87	▼77
Yap	Showers	▲86	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲88	▼78
Pohnpei	Showers	▲85	▼78
Kosrae	Rain	▲86	▼78
Majuro	Rain	▲84	▼77

Around The Globe

Auckland	Partly Sunny	▲82	▼70
Beijing	Cloudy	▲40	▼25
Hong Kong	Cloudy	▲64	▼58
Honolulu	Showers	▲78	▼68
London	Cloudy	▲45	▼34
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲74	▼48
Manila	Showers	▲87	▼72
Melbourne	Hot	▲99	▼74
Miami	Mostly Sunny	▲65	▼53
New York	Partly Sunny	▲29	▼21
Osaka	Rain	▲52	▼36
Paris	Mostly Sunny	▲45	▼31
Pusan	Mostly Cloudy	▲48	▼29
Rome	Partly Sunny	▲53	▼38
Salem	Partly Sunny	▲46	▼29
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲62	▼44
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	▲41	▼20
Tokyo	Rain	▲47	▼35
Washington, DC	Sunny	▲38	▼29

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, FRIDAY, JAN. 30, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line enters the discussion area near Minami Tori Shima at 25N157E and stretches southwestward across Agrihan at 18N145E to end at 16N139E. Cloudiness and scattered showers are found along and up to 300 miles northwest of the shear line. A near-equatorial trough over Mindanao extends southeastward across south of Koror at 6N134E to end at EQ148E. Scattered showers are occurring along the trough axis over Koror west of a line from 9N135E to 3N135E. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers south of Chuuk within 80 miles of 6N151E and between Chuuk and Pohnpei within 100 miles of a line from 4N154E to 11N158E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are present over Kosrae and Kwajalein but west of Majuro within 230 miles of a line from EQ155E to 7N171E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor		
4:29 AM Today	Low Tide:	0.3 Feet
10:53 AM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
5:26 PM Today	Low Tide:	0.6 Feet
10:57 PM Today	High Tide:	1.6 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:46 AM	6:15 PM
Sunday	6:46 AM	6:15 PM
Monday	6:46 AM	6:16 PM
Tuesday	6:46 AM	6:16 PM
Wednesday	6:46 AM	6:16 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	9:39 AM	10:17 PM
Sunday	10:18 AM	11:10 PM
Monday	10:59 AM	
Tuesday	11:46 AM	12:02 AM
Wednesday	12:39 PM	1:07 AM

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  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
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- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

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- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral
Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center
Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish
Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday- Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish
Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish
Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota
Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota
Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish
Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish
Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish
Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios
Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad
Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan
Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7-9pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan
Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm
Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan
Worship/Study Opportunities
Adult Sunday School: 9am
Youth Sunday School: 9am
English Worship Service Sunday: 10am
Sunday Service: 5:30pm
Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm
Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm
Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;
Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm
Mid-week Service: 7:30pm
Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm
Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30 pm
Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am
Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau,
Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan
Worship Service: 9am
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am
Sunday: 7am
Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm
Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan
Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English)
Saturday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville
Sunday Services
9:00 AM
Place of the church-next to Mt. Carmel Cathedral on Chalan Kanoa Dr. • Tel: 322-6158
Pastor JJ Matsumoto

Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)
Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)
9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 6:30pm, home group
8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan
English Service: 9-11am, Sunday
Tagalog Service: 6-8pm, Sunday

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan
Sunday School: 8:20am
Sunday Adult: 10am
Sunday Adult: 11:30am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan
Sunday Worship Service: 10am–12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan
English Worship Service: 9-10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6-7pm
Children Sunday School: 9-10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry
Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church
Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided)
Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620

Saipan Bible Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30-10am
Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Saipan Christian Church
Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm -9pm
Monday: 8 pm -10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Saipan Church of Christ
Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 6pm
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm

Saipan Community Church
(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan
(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10-10:40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church
(Formerly Saipan Baptist Church)
Afetna St., San Antonio
Sunday
9am Sunday school
10am Regular worship
6pm worship
Wednesday
7pm worship
Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. Mclure at 234-1939/235-7779.

Thy Word Ministries Saipan Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service located in Chalan Paio, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.
Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi
Service Times
Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries
Sunday 5:30am-6:30am Morning prayer
7am-9am English service
7am-9am Sunday school
10am-12noon English service, Koblerville
Wednesday 7pm-9pm Prayer meeting
Saturday 7pm-9pm Tagalog service
Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church
Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship:10:30am
Sunday PM Worship:7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm
Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 31, 2000

Legislature's travel spending up 56 pct.
Despite the governor's call for prudence due to the Commonwealth's chaotic fiscal house, travel expenses by the 11th Legislature jumped by 56.44 percent amid major reduction in overseas trips by the executive and the judicial branches of government. Excluding medical referral, necessary for public health, total government travel was reduced by 46 percent to $2.1 million last year from $3.9 million in 1997. A report from the Department of Finance noted that the Legislature increased its travel spending in 1999 to $704,578 compared with the 1997 level recorded at $454,988. The Senate spent $433,462 in government money for travel during the period under review, while the House of Representatives used up more than $270,000 for its members' off-island trips last year.

New scholarship program underway
The Senate has taken the initiative in laying down the groundwork for a new scholarship program which will reduce government subsidy while providing incentives to local students who eventually earn a college degree. Legislation proposing the mechanism is expected to be introduced by Senate President Paul A. Manglona when the upper house holds its first regular session within the next few weeks in order to fast-track its implementation. Senate Vice President Thomas P. Villagomez met last week with Dan Nielsen, the governor's special education consultant, and Hilaria K. Santos, administrator of the Scholarship's Office, to get update on the draft of the proposal which is being drawn up by the executive branch.

January 31, 2001

Business owners air disgust on prostitution in Garapan
A Department of Public Safety-commissioned survey conducted from September to December 2000 equally top-billed prostitution and public parking as the most prevalent concern in the Western Garapan district. Majority of survey respondents also listed purse snatching, theft, burglary, sewage, trash bins, closed roads, street market, and littering under the tourist commercial district's 10 most pressing problems. DPS officers Chong Won and Jason Tarkong unveiled results of the study during its monthly Western Garapan Community meeting yesterday which drew the presence of over 25 business proprietors and community members.

Construction sector unlikely to grow
The construction industry will be flat and slow in the next two years with business leaders keeping a conservative projection on the growth of the Northern Marianas economy due to current financial situations in the mainland US and in Asia. Business analysts pointed out that unless financing problems and certain government policies are threshed out, and concrete efforts are mapped out, the construction sector is not likely to show any significant signs of growth. Contractors have been complaining about the apparently unfriendly business climate in the CNMI, resulting in the closure of several construction companies. This has been aggravated by the slowdown of the tourism sector.

January 31, 2002

Accidental shooting victim dies
Family and friends of the girl who was accidentally shot on the head Sunday were overcome with grief over the seven-year-old's death Wednesday afternoon at the local hospital. The child was reportedly unhooked from the life support system at 1:30pm yesterday and finally succumbed to death minutes later. Acting police spokesperson Lt. Pete C. Muña confirmed last night that the child died at exactly 1:34pm. Sources said the victim was clinically dead as early as Monday, resulting from a severe head injury caused by a bullet that was fired from a .22 caliber rifle.

Saipan shoreline eroding
Saipan's beaches—stretching from Garapan to San Antonio—have eroded over the past several years, according to Coastal Resources Management Office coordinator Benny Pangelinan. Some portions of the Managaha Island, a popular tourist attraction on Saipan, suffered the same doom. "There is some kind of erosion on the beach from the Quartermaster Road in Garapan to the Pacific Island's Club in San Antonio going on for the past several years," Pangelinan said. He said the US Army Corps of Engineers is planning to conduct a study to determine the extent of erosion that has diminished Saipan's sand beaches.

Business

Obama calls $18B in Wall St. bonuses 'shameful'

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama issued a withering critique Thursday of Wall Street corporate behavior, calling it "the height of irresponsibility" for employees to be paid more than $18 billion in bonuses last year while their crumbling financial sector received a bailout from taxpayers. "It is shameful," Obama said from the Oval Office. "And part of what we're going to need is for the folks on Wall Street who are asking for help to show some restraint, and show some discipline, and show some sense of responsibility."

Obama

The president's comments, made with new Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner at his side, came in swift response to a report that employees of the New York financial world garnered an estimated $18.4 billion in bonuses last year. The figure, from the New York state comptroller, drew prominent news coverage.

Yet Obama's stand also came just one day after he surrounded himself with well-paid chief executives at the White House. He had pulled in those business leaders and hailed them for being on the "front lines in seeing the enormous problems in our economy right now."

The president said the public dislikes the idea of helping the financial sector dig out of a hole, only to see it get bigger because of lavish spending. The comptroller's report found that Wall Street bonuses were down 44 percent, but still at about the same level as they were during the boom time of 2004.

Obama said he and Geithner will speak directly to Wall Street leaders about the bonuses, which threaten to undermine public support for more government intervention as the economy keeps reeling.

The House just approved an economic stimulus plan that would cost taxpayers more than $800 billion; the Senate is considering its own version.

Separately, Congress also passed a $700 billion plan last year to shore up the financial sector, one that drew howls of criticism about a lack of transparency.

"We're going to be having conversations as this process moves forward directly with these folks on Wall Street to underscore that they have to start acting in a more responsible fashion if we are to, together, get this economy rolling again," Obama said.

"There will be time for them to make profits, and there will be time for them to get bonuses," Obama said. "Now is not that time."

Obama said Geithner has already had to step in to stop one company from taking delivery of a new corporate jet it planned to buy even after receiving billions of dollars of support from the government. That bank, Citigroup, canceled the deal earlier this week.

Economy likely shrank at fastest clip since '82

WASHINGTON (AP)—The country tumbled deeper into recession and probably logged its worst economic performance in a quarter-century during the final three months of last year as battered consumers and businesses throttled back spending.

The U.S. economy is deteriorating at an alarming clip as the housing, credit and financial crises—the worst since the 1930s—feed on each other in a vicious cycle that has proven difficult for Washington policymakers to break.

The Commerce Department is set to release a report Friday expected to show the economy shrank at a pace of 5.4 percent in the October-December period, a much faster descent than the 0.5 percent decline logged in the prior quarter. If economists' forecasts are correct, it would mark the weakest quarterly showing since an annualized drop of 6.4 percent in the first quarter of 1982, when the country was suffering through a severe recession.

"It was a bloodbath," said Richard Yamarone, economist at Argus Research, referring to the economy's fourth-quarter performance.

A massive pullback by consumers is expected to play a prominent role in the economy's worsening backslide. They are cutting back on spending as jobs disappear and major investments—homes, stocks, retirement accounts—tank in value. Businesses are retrenching, too, as profits shrivel and demand wanes from customers in the U.S. and overseas.

"Households and businesses were bombarded by all the fallout," Yamarone said.

Many economists think the fourth quarter will turn out to be the worst quarter for the recession, which is now in its second year. But the economy will stay very weak in the months ahead. Analysts believe the economy is contracting in the current quarter at a pace of 4 percent or more.

Nation

Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich thrown out of office

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (AP)—Gov. Rod Blagojevich was thrown out of office Thursday without a single lawmaker coming to his defense, brought down by a government-for-sale scandal that stretched from Chicago to Capitol Hill and turned the foul-mouthed politician into a national punchline.

Blagojevich, accused of trying to sell Barack Obama's vacant Senate seat, becomes the first U.S. governor in more than 20 years to be removed by impeachment.

After a four-day trial, the Illinois Senate voted 59-0 to convict him of abuse of power, automatically ousting the second-term Democrat. In a second, identical vote, lawmakers further barred Blagojevich from ever holding public office in the state again.

"He failed the test of character. He is beneath the dignity of the state of Illinois. He is no longer worthy to be our governor," said Sen. Matt Murphy, a Republican from suburban Chicago.

Blagojevich's troubles are not over. Federal prosecutors are drawing up an indictment against him on corruption charges.

Outside his Chicago home Thursday night, Blagojevich vowed to "keep fighting to clear my name," and added: "Give me a chance to show you that I haven't let you down."

"I love the people of Illinois today more than I ever have before," he said. And in a joking reference to Chicago's history of crooked politics, he reached down to a boy in the crowd of well-wishers and said: "I love you, man. You know, this is Chicago. You can vote for me. You're old enough."

Democratic Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn, one of Blagojevich's critics, was promptly sworn in as governor and said he would work to "restore the faith of the people of Illinois in the integrity of their government."

Blagojevich's name and picture were promptly stripped from the state's official Web site, and his photo was removed from a display at the Capitol entrance. Quinn also canceled Blagojevich's security detail.

Blagojevich, 52, had boycotted the first three days of the impeachment trial, calling the proceedings a kangaroo court. But on Thursday, he went before the Senate to beg for his job, delivering a 47-minute plea that was, by turns, defiant, humble and sentimental.

AP

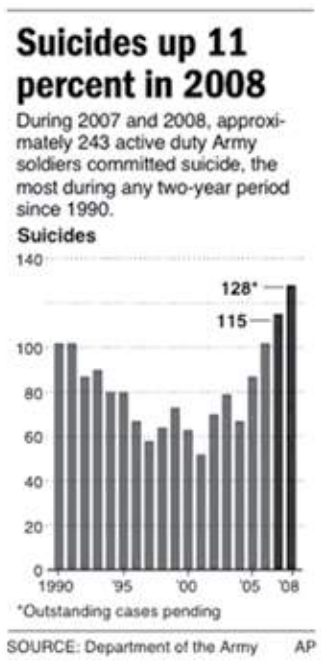
Former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich poses for a photo with Liam Hudson as he talks to the media outside of his Chicago home, Thursday, Jan. 29, 2009.

Army suicides at record high, passing civilians

WASHINGTON (AP)—Stressed by war and long overseas tours, U.S. soldiers killed themselves last year at the highest rate on record, the toll rising for a fourth straight year and even surpassing the suicide rate among comparable civilians. Army leaders said they were doing everything they could think of to curb the deaths and appealed for more mental health professionals to join and help out.

At least 128 soldiers committed suicide in 2008, the Army said Thursday. And the final count is likely to be even higher because 15 more suspicious deaths are still being investigated.

"Why do the numbers keep going up? We cannot tell you," said Army Secretary Pete Geren. "We can tell you that across the Army we're committed to doing everything we can to address the problem."



It's all about pressure and the military approach, said Kim Ruocco, 45, whose Marine husband was an officer and Cobra helicopter pilot who hanged himself in a California hotel room in 2005. That was one month before he was to return to Iraq a second time.

She said her husband, John, had completed 75 missions in Iraq and was struggling with anxiety and depression but felt he'd be letting others down if he sought help and couldn't return.

"He could be any Marine because he was highly decorated, stable, the guy everyone went to for help," Ruocco said in a telephone interview. "But the thing is ... the culture of the military is to be strong no matter what and not show any weakness."

Feds: Ex-CIA spy, son renewed Russian contact

WASHINGTON (AP)—An imprisoned ex-CIA spy and his son have been charged with renewing contact with the father's former Russian handlers to get more money—and perhaps a "pension"—for his espionage.

Harold Nicholson and his 24-year-old son, Nathaniel, have been indicted in Oregon, where the elder Nicholson is still serving time in a federal prison for past espionage charges.

The pair face charges of conspiring to act as agents of a foreign government and money laundering. The duo's plans were undone by an imprisoned bank robber who told authorities six years ago that Nicholson was trying to establish contact with his former spymasters, according to court papers.

The indictment says Harold Nicholson, who pleaded guilty in 1997 after being paid $300,000 to pass secrets to the Russians, wanted to receive additional payments for his work, and used his son as a go-between.

Officials charged that Nathaniel Nicholson collected another $35,593 in a series of recent trips to meet Russians in San Francisco, Mexico City, Lima, and even a T.G.I. Friday's restaurant in Cyprus in December.

On each return trip to the United States, the messenger son would declare less than $10,000 in cash to avoid federal law requiring him to disclose the source of the money, authorities said.

Nathaniel Nicholson, who lives in Eugene, Ore., had been under surveillance for more than a year, according to court records. He was arrested Thursday morning in Oregon and he and his father were scheduled to appear in court later in the day, officials said.

Senate GOP leader: Party must explain core values

WASHINGTON (AP)—After crushing defeats in back-to-back elections, the top Senate Republican warned Thursday that the GOP risks remaining out of power in the White House and Congress unless it better explains its core principles to woo one-time faithful and new loyalists.

"The results of the two recent elections are real, and so are the obstacles we face as a party," Sen. Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., told the Republican National Committee on Thursday. "My concern is that unless we do something to adapt, our status as a minority party may become too pronounced for an easy recovery."

"The situation is challenging, but it's far from irreversible," McConnell added, a dash of optimism in an otherwise stark assessment of where the Republican Party went wrong as he provided a road map for how it can right itself.

He spoke to Republicans gathered in Washington to choose the next national chairman; five candidates are trying to unseat former President George W. Bush's hand-picked RNC chairman, Mike Duncan of Kentucky. The vote is Friday.

Implicit in McConnell's message was the concern that the Republican Party under Bush strayed from its beliefs, resulting in drubbings in two straight elections.

While McConnell praised Bush as a man of principle, he said: "We can all agree, sad as it is, that he wasn't winning any popularity contests. And history shows that unpopular presidents are usually a drag on everybody else who wears their political label."

ACROSS THE NATION

NJ police: Woman's ex-friends used cold as weapon

NORTH BERGEN, N.J. (AP)—A 19-year-old woman who thought she was going to a party was instead driven to a rural wooded area and abandoned in 8-degree weather in a long-planned attack by three friends angry with her over an insurance claim, police said Thursday. The victim was wearing only a dress and one shoe, having lost the other in a struggle as she was dragged from the car, said Lt. Frank Cannella of the North Bergen police. A motorist soon stopped and let the victim use a cell phone but refused to give her a lift. The victim used the phone to call one of the women who abandoned her, Cannella said. She spent more than an hour in the freezing cold before flagging down another motorist, who took her to a hospital, he said. The North Bergen woman, whom police did not identify, may need surgery after suffering frostbite to both feet Jan. 16 in Alpine, a town on the Hudson River about 18 miles north of New York City, Cannella said. "These actions were so profound that it leads you to believe there was a tremendous indifference to human life," Cannella said.

Family: Octuplets' mother has 6 other children

WHITTIER, Calif. (AP)—The Southern California woman who gave birth to octuplets this week has six other children and never expected to have eight more when she took fertility treatment, her mother said Thursday. Angela Suleman said her daughter expects a big challenge raising 14 children. The good news, she said, is all the babies appear healthy. "I looked at those babies. They are so tiny and so beautiful," she told The Los Angeles Times. Suleman's daughter gave birth to the octuplets Monday at a hospital in Bellflower but has requested that doctors keep her name confidential. For three days, media knew little about the woman, until an acquaintance of the family told CBS' "The Early Show" on Thursday that the mother is "fairly young" and lives with her parents and her six children, including twins. Within hours, media had camped out at the family's home in Whittier, where the babies' grandfather pulled up in a minivan in the evening and briefly spoke to The Associated Press. Beside him were two children—a 7-year-old and 6-year-old—who said they were excited to have eight new siblings.

Mo. girl: I was tired of my dad abusing my sister

HARRISONVILLE, Mo. (AP)—The sister of a girl who was allegedly molested and impregnated four times by their father says she waited until she turned 18 to come forward because she was afraid of being placed in state custody. "My dad was doing all this crazy stuff," the 18-year-old told The Associated Press in an interview Thursday. "I got fed up with it until I finally ran my mouth. ... I couldn't see my sister suffer anymore. That's why I wanted her out." She said her sister, now 19, was 13 when their father started molesting her. The 18-year-old said her sibling confided in her about the abuse after becoming pregnant the first time. "But I already knew," she said. The 18-year-old told police in October that her sister was being molested by their father and had given birth to four of his children. The tip led to a search of a rural property in Harrisonville where the family used to live. The property's new owners found two sealed coolers with the remains of two infants on Jan. 1. Authorities said one of those infants died after not receiving medical treatment for pneumonia. The 47-year-old father has been charged with second-degree murder in the death of that baby, who was born in November 2006. He also is accused of fathering the other infant whose body was found in the coolers, and investigators said they were looking into the circumstances of that baby's death.

Asia

North Korea declares past accords with South 'dead'

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea declared all military and political agreements with South Korea "dead" Friday, warning it would not honor past accords if Seoul continues to push the Koreas to the brink of war.

The North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of Korea accused South Korean President Lee Myung-bak of raising tensions on the Korean peninsula with his hard-line position on Pyongyang. It warned that Lee's stance would only draw "a heavier blow and shameful destruction."

"The group of traitors has already reduced all the agreements reached between the north and the south in the past to dead documents," the committee in charge of inter-Korean affairs said early Friday in a statement carried by the state-run Korean Central News Agency.

Tensions between the two Koreas, which fought a bitter three-year war in the 1950s and remain divided by one of the world's most heavily armed borders, have been high since Lee took office in Seoul nearly a year ago.

Lee, a conservative, pledged to get tough with Pyongyang, questioning the wisdom of his predecessors' "sunshine policy" of nurturing reconciliation by handing over aid to the nuclear-armed North unconditionally. Pyongyang responded by cutting off all reconciliation talks with Seoul and ratcheting up the rhetoric.

Earlier this month, the North's military accused the South of preparing to wage war and said it was prepared to respond to any southern aggression.

Friday's statement specifically mentioned the Koreas' western maritime border, unilaterally drawn by the U.S.-led United Nations Command at the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

Pyongyang claims the sea border should be redrawn farther south and on Friday declared agreements drawing the boundary "nullified."

Afghan presidential poll delayed for poor security

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)—Afghanistan will postpone its presidential election until Aug. 20, some four months later than the constitution specifies, to give incoming U.S. forces more time to stabilize the country's most violent regions, the national election commission said Thursday.

Opposition lawmakers decried the delay and said they won't recognize Hamid Karzai as president after May 22—his last day in office, according to the constitution. Parliament is set to debate the issue Saturday in a potentially contentious session that could signal whether a constitutional crisis looms.

"If Karzai is in office after May 22, that will be illegal," said Sayyid Agha Hussain Fazel Sancharaki, spokesman for the National Front, a group of opposition lawmakers. "Nobody is allowed to change the constitution."

The constitution says the election should be held 30 to 60 days before May 22. But Azizullah Lodin, head of the Independent Election Commission, said the security situation is not good enough for a vote to occur so soon.

The country continues to be plagued by militant attacks and suicide bombers since a U.S.-led invasion ousted the Taliban's hard-line Islamist regime from power in 2001. The Taliban insurgency has strengthened in recent years, gaining more control over southern regions, and last year was the deadliest for U.S. troops since the invasion.

The August election date is meant to be a compromise between the president's office—which wanted the vote delayed until fall—and Parliament, which has said elections must occur in the spring, Lodin said.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Sri Lanka asks rebels to release civilians

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa appealed Friday to the Tamil Tiger rebels to allow the estimated 250,000 civilians trapped in the northern war zone to flee to safety in the next 48 hours. Rajapaksa's appeal, published Friday on a government Web site, came after human rights groups and a top U.N. official expressed serious concern for the fate of the noncombatants in the area amid reports of heavy civilian casualties. Human rights groups have accused the rebels of holding the civilians hostage and accused the military of launching heavy attacks in areas filled with noncombatants, including a government-declared "safe zone" in the north. The rebels and the military deny the charges. Rajapaksa said the rebels' refusal to let the civilians leave was endangering their lives and he accused the rebels—known formally as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam—of putting their heavy artillery inside the "safe zone" and using it as a "launching pad" for attacking government troops.

SKorean confesses to killing 7 women

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—A masseur accused of killing a university student has confessed to her death—and to strangling six other women over the past two years, police south of Seoul said Friday. Kang Ho-sun, 38, was arrested Saturday at his workplace in Ansan, a city about 20 miles (30 kilometers) south of Seoul, in connection with the killing of a student who disappeared last month. Her body was found in a nearby town Sunday, police said. Kang confessed Thursday to kidnapping and killing the student—and six other women between December 2006 and November 2008, said Park Hak-geun, a senior police official in Suwon, the capital of Gyeonggi Province. Kang also is suspected in the 2005 arson deaths of his fourth wife and her mother, the Yonhap news agency reported.

New species of babbler bird discovered in China

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—A new species of the fist-sized babbler bird has been found in a network of underground caves in southwestern China, raising the prospect the country could become a hot spot for other discoveries, a conservation group said Thursday. Ornithologists Zhou Fang and Jiang Aiwu first spotted the dark brown bird with white specks on its chest in 2005 and have since confirmed its identity as an undescribed species. They named it the Nonggang babbler, or Stachyris nonggangensis, for the region in China where it was found. A formal description was published last year in The Auk, which is the quarterly journal of the Virginia-based American Ornithologists' Union. "This is exciting evidence that there could be many more interesting discoveries awaiting ornithologists in China," said Nigel Collar of Birdlife International, which announced the discovery.

World

Somali pirates hijack German gas tanker

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP)—Somali pirates hijacked a German tanker loaded with liquefied petroleum gas Thursday off the Horn of Africa. The ship's 13-man crew was reported safe, even though gunshots were heard over the ship's radio.

The MV Longchamp is the third ship captured by pirates this month in the Gulf of Aden, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

Piracy has taken an increasing toll on international shipping in the key water link between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean. Pirates made an estimated $30 million hijacking ships for ransom last year, seizing more than 40 vessels off Somalia's coastline.

More than a dozen warships from countries including Britain, France, Germany, Iran, China and the United States now patrol Somali waters to protect vessels. But the warships were not near the Longchamp when it was taken, said Lt. Nathan Christensen, a Bahrain-based spokesman for the U.S. 5th Fleet.

Seven pirates boarded the Bahamas-registered Longchamp early Thursday, the tanker's manager, Bernhard Schulte Shipmanagement, said in a statement.

Iraqi shoe hurler inspires art in Saddam hometown

BAGHDAD (AP)—When an Iraqi journalist hurled his shoes at George W. Bush last month at a Baghdad press conference, the attack spawned a flood of Web quips, political satire and street rallies across the Arab world.

Now it's inspired a work of art.

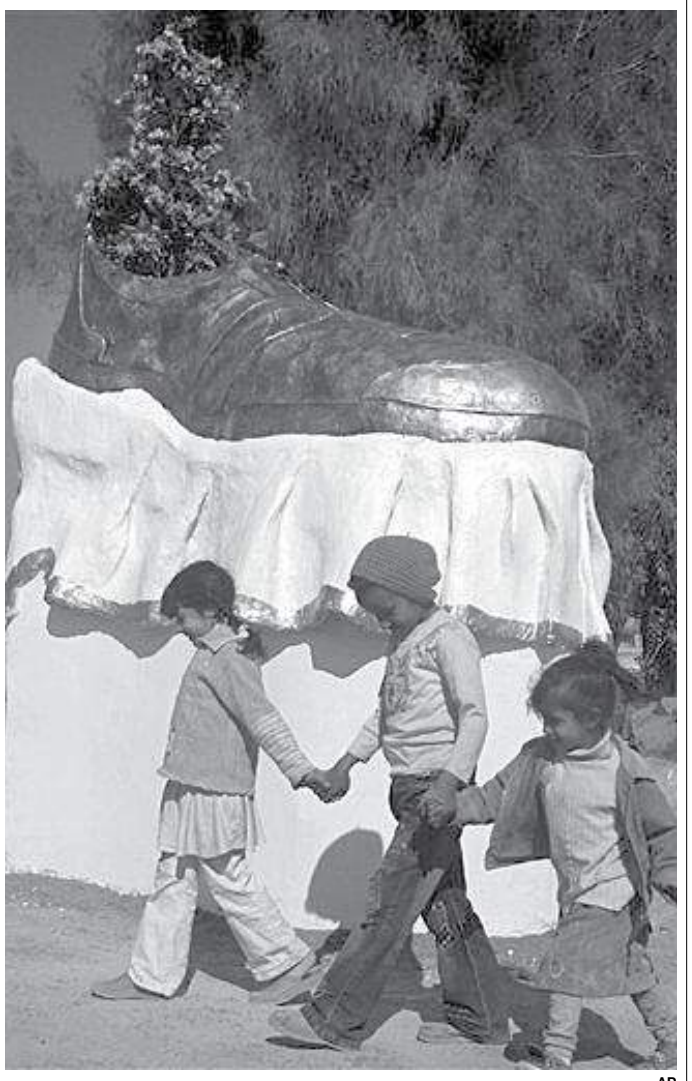
A sofa-sized sculpture—a single copper-coated shoe on a stand carved to resemble flowing cloth—was formally unveiled to the public Thursday in the hometown of the late Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein.

Officials and visitors walked around the outdoor sculpture during the brief ceremony, pondering on its eccentricities—such as a tree poking up from the shoe's interior.

Its sculptor called it a fitting tribute to the shoe hurler, Iraqi journalist Muntadhar al-Zeidi, and his folk hero reputation in parts of the Muslim world and beyond.

The Baghdad-based artist, Laith al-Amari, said the work honors al-Zeidi and "is a source of pride for all Iraqis." He added: "It's not a political work,"

But its location in Saddam's hometown of Tikrit, about 80 miles north of Baghdad, is a point of reference for prewar nostalgia among some Iraqis.



AP

Girls stand next to a sculpture of a shoe that serves as a monument to the shoes thrown at then-US president George W. Bush in Tikrit, 130 kilometers (80 miles) north of Baghdad, Iraq, Thursday, Jan. 29, 2009.

WORLD BRIEFS

Obama envoy meets Palestinian leaders in West Bank

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP)—The Obama administration's Mideast point man said Thursday that the Palestinian government in the West Bank must play a crucial role in cementing the shaky Gaza truce so broader peace efforts can be revived. The top political leader in Hamas-ruled Gaza said the group's top priority after Israel's bruising offensive was to heal the rift that has led to dueling Palestinian governments. Speaking publicly for the first time since the Jan. 18 cease-fire, Gaza Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh also expressed hope the U.S. would change its Mideast policies. Israel launched its devastating three-week military campaign to end years of rocket fire on its southern towns, but said toppling Hamas was not its aim. On Thursday, however, leading candidates to become Israel's next prime minister warned that the militants' days of ruling Gaza were numbered. "In the long run, there won't be any other choice but to topple the Hamas government," said front-runner Benjamin Netanyahu, leader of the Likud Party.

Turkish PM admonishes Israel president over Gaza

DAVOS, Switzerland (AP)—Turkey's prime minister stalked off the stage at the World Economic Forum red-faced Thursday after reproaching Israel's president over the Gaza offensive by saying "You kill people." The packed audience, which included President Barack Obama's close adviser Valerie Jarrett, appeared stunned as Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Israeli President Shimon Peres raised their voices and traded accusations. Peres was passionate in his defense of Israel's three-week offensive against Hamas militants, launched in reaction to eight years of rocket fire aimed at Israeli territory. As he spoke, Peres often turned toward Erdogan, who in his remarks had criticized the Israeli blockade of Gaza, saying it was an "open air prison, isolated from the rest of the world" and referred to the Palestinian death toll of about 1,300, more than half of those civilians. Thirteen Israelis also died. "Why did they fire rockets? There was no siege against Gaza," Peres said, his voice rising in emotion. "Why did they fight us, what did they want? There was never a day of starvation in Gaza."

Maharlika

PINOY LIFE IN THE MARIANAS

Saturday, January 31, 2009

Central bank warns of 'remittance scam'

By MICHELLE REMO
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

The central bank, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, has directed banks and other companies engaged in the money-transfer business to adopt stricter remittance procedures in the wake of the so-called "remittance scam" that victimizes credit card holders.

The scam is done by entities falsely claiming to be remittance service providers and by unscrupulous individuals outside the Philippines. They send money to the Philippines by using credit cards of other people without the cardholders knowing it.

Illegal use of someone else's credit cards is a form of electronic theft, which has increased over the years as people use more modern ways to transact business.

The BSP said some of these entities and people doing fraudulent money transfers recruit agents in an initial recipient country like the Philippines, who are then tasked to send the money to another country where the final recipient is located.

"The scheme allows the recipient/beneficiaries to collect money belonging to victimized credit card holders," BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla Jr. said through Circular Letter 2009-06, which the central bank issued Tuesday to caution remittance centers against fraudulent money transfers.

Given the technological improvements adopted to ease the process of money transfer, cases of cyber crimes have likewise increased, prompting the BSP to require remittance centers to strictly comply with the required remittance procedures.

Voter registration for OFWs starts tomorrow

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Tomorrow marks the first day of absentee voting registration for qualified Filipinos in the CNMI, according to Philippine Consul General in the CNMI Wilfredo DL. Maximo.

Qualified workers should proceed to the Philippine Consulate General office on the 5th floor of the Marianas Business Plaza (formerly Nauru Building) in Susupe.

The registration is from 9am to 4pm.

Maximo said Filipinos have until Aug. 31, 2009, to register. With the exception of the first day on Feb. 1, which is a Sunday, registration will be from Monday to Friday.

In the CNMI, an estimated 7,000 contract workers from the Philippines are expected to qualify to register as absentee voters for the May 14, 2010 presidential elections.

The 2010 national elections would be the third time that Filipinos abroad will participate in elections in the Philippines while away from home.

Because it's a presidential—rather than a mid-term—election, more Filipino workers are expected to register to vote.

Filipinos abroad are allowed to vote for senatorial candidates and party-list groups during the local and congressional polls, and during national elections, for presidential and vice-presidential candidates, in accordance with the Philippine Republic Act 9189, or the Absentee Voting Act of 2003.

Maximo said the names of those who registered in 2003 and 2006 but did not vote in the 2004 or 2007 Philippine elections will be purged from the list of certified absentee voters, so they have to come in for this year's registration if they want to vote for the upcoming presidential polls.

However, the consulate general is also taking into account the effect on the number of registered voters of the weak CNMI economy which has forced many workers from the Philippines to go home.

Those who wish to register should present a valid Philippine passport.

Accountants urged to uphold professional standards

MIFICPA inducts 2009 officers

A Bagong Bayani awardee and a longtime executive of Tan Holdings Corp. implored accountants and auditors in the CNMI to continue to uphold the codes and standards of their profession even at the face of the challenging economic times.

Glicerio "Eli" Arago, executive vice president of the conglomerate, delivered this message while serving as keynote speaker of the 2009 induction rites of the Marianas Institute of Filipino CPAs and Accountants held last Saturday at the Filipino Workers' Resource Center in the Marianas Business Plaza.

"In the recent past the world has witnessed a number of corporate failures such as Enron and Worldcom brought about largely by fraud on the part of employees. This has brought the discussion of corporate governance to the fore in finance, industry and business. The behavior of corporations and the people that run these corporations have come under increased scrutiny by stakeholders and the wider public. Thus, our profession provides a critical example of the need for integrity and professionalism, and the MIFICPA has always displayed its commitment in ensuring that these principles are upheld by its members," he said.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Philippine Consul General Wilfredo Maximo, third from right, and Tan Holdings Corp. executive vice president Glicerio Arago, second from right, pose with MIFICPA officers after receiving their plaques of appreciation from the group.

Arago added that the accounting and auditing profession becomes doubly critical now that the Commonwealth, like the rest of the world, is undergoing an economic downturn.

"Now, more than ever, our profession, commitment and service is crucial to the future of the Marianas. The businesses for which we work will have to make some very tough choices, choices that may determine whether the company survives or not. And they will base their decisions to a large extent, if not totally on, the result of our efforts—characterized by professionalism, commitment, and unadulterated desire to serve and save the community," he said.

Last Saturday's event saw the induction of MIFICPA's 2009 set of officers led by president Melvin Malvar of Tropex Garden Co., vice president for external affairs Rene Cariaso of Century Insurance Co., and vice president for internal affairs Robert Reyes, also of Century Insurance.

Also sworn in by Philippine Consul General Wilfredo Maxino were Aileen Indino of Grant Thornton LLP, secretary; Donna Paleracio of Joeten Enterprises, assistant secretary; Ronnel Calma of Car Quest, treasurer; Cristy Villaflor of Fiesta Resort and Spa Saipan, assistant treasurer; Bebilyn Estrada of Century Insurance, auditor; Nolito Santos of Marpac, business manager; Marlon Estigoy of Hafadai Beach Hotel, public relations officer; and Irene Santiago of Shirley's Coffee Shop, Loise Manese of Joeten Ace Hardware, Aileen Javier of Hardt Eye Clinic, Marie Luisa Taniegra of RNV Construction, and Jhocelyn Doreza of Burger & Comer PC CPA, board members. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

Installation of Saipan's Mason officers today

Elected and appointed officers for this year's Saipan Masons will be installed today, Saturday, at the Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga ballroom.

Businessman Isagani Benoza will be installed as Worshipful Master for the Emon Lodge No. 179 of Masonic District No. 54 under the Jurisdiction of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the Philippines.

The ceremony will be held from 5pm to 9pm.

Alfredo D. Leon Guerrero, the Guam International Airport Authority property manager, is the guest of honor during the installation ceremony.

Leon Guerrero is the son of former Guam governor Manuel Leon Guerrero. At present he holds the title of Very Worshipful Noble in the Masonry. He is also the past District Deputy Grand Master for the Grand Lodge of the Philippines.

The Guam official is also the president of the Guam Shriners Association, which is under the jurisdiction of the Aloha Shriners of Hawaii.

Businessman Isagani Benoza will be installed as Worshipful Master for the Emon Lodge No. 179 of Masonic District No. 54.

The Very Worshipful and Past Junior Grand Lecturer Ramoncito B. Piaña will serve as the installing officer, while Angel Baldemore will be the master of ceremony.

Masons, also known as Freemasons, belong to the oldest and largest fraternal organization in the world. Some of the Masons' charitable contributions go to the Shriners centers in Hawaii and California that treat crippled and burned children worldwide. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

? LABOR FRONT

Wage rates, two-year contracts

By FERDIE PONCE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Q: Should the wages of farmers and domestic helpers be in hourly terms?

A: The regulations of the Labor Reform Law require that the wages of domestic helpers, household maintenance and yard workers, and farmers shall be stated in hourly terms.

Wages shall be stated in hourly terms unless the alien worker is overtime-exempt, in which case wages shall be stated in biweekly terms.

An approved employment contract shall provide that any future increase in the applicable minimum wage prior to the termination of the contract shall apply to work performed under the contract on or after the effective date of the increase.

■ ■ ■

Q: Why are some employment contracts for alien workers now for two-year periods?

A: The Regulations state that the usual approved employment contract provides for a one-year term. An employer and a foreign employee, however, may agree on a two-year term. An alien worker employed under a two-year contract must provide a new health certification within the first month of the second year under the contract.

Employers with special needs or specialty jobs may contract for a shorter period of time than one year.

■ ■ ■

Q: An alien worker is not currently employed under a Labor-approved contract and therefore he or she cannot be located at the former employer's address. Does that worker need to contact Labor?

A: Yes. According to the Regulations, a foreign national worker who is not currently employed under an approved employment contract must provide a current residence address and telephone contact to the Labor director. The alien worker needs to update his or her address and contact information as necessary so that Labor can locate him or her.

RP mayor, 2 others dead in rebel ambush

ZAMBOANGA, Philippines (AP)—Suspected Muslim militants killed a town mayor and two bodyguards Thursday in a roadside ambush in the southern Philippines, the military said.

Mayor Karam Jakila was returning to his town of Al Barka in the southern Basilan region in a three-car convoy when several men opened fire with assault rifles, killing him and two bodyguards. His four other companions were wounded, marine Lt. Col. Leonard Vincent Teodoro said.

It was not clear if the security detail of Jakila, who had received many death threats, managed to return fire, Teodoro said, adding that Muslim militants were among the suspects.

The military condemned the attack, saying it showed "that the perils of terrorism ... would not spare anyone." The attack appeared to have been an attempt to disrupt a government crackdown on a surge of kidnappings, the military said in a statement.

The military did not name any group. However, it has often blamed two Muslim groups—the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the smaller but more violent Abu Sayyaf—for terrorist acts, including recent kidnappings for ransom in Basilan, about 550 miles (880 kilometers) south of Manila.

An investigation was under way to determine whether the attack was staged by militants or by Jakila's personal and political enemies, said regional police chief Bensali Jabarani.

Muslim militants were blamed for a 2007 attack in Al Barka that left 14 marines dead, 10 of whom were found beheaded.

6 dead, 40 hurt in fireworks factory blast

AP

Soldiers inspect the site of a powerful explosion at a fireworks factory in Trece Martires city, Cavite province, 50 kilometers (31 miles) south of Manila, Philippines, Thursday, Jan. 29, 2009.

By OLIVER TEVES
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—A powerful explosion destroyed a fireworks factory and a nearby electronics plant south of Manila on Thursday, killing at least six people and injuring more than 40, officials said.

The cause of the explosion was not immediately established, but police suspected it was an accident, regional police Chief Perfecto Palad said.

The blast turned an industrial zone 31 miles (50 kilometers) south of Manila into a smoldering wasteland and gouged out a crater the size of a school bus, witnesses said.

Part of the roof of the Starmaker fireworks factory landed more than a mile (1.5 kilometers) away. Unexploded fireworks rained down in the area and shock waves shattered windows, knocked out electricity and toppled concrete walls, said army Col. Romeo Ucag, who responded with his men.

At least 45 people were treated for cuts and injuries at three hospitals, including a man and a woman with severe burns, hospital staff said.

The mutilated bodies of two men and a woman were recovered outside the factory compound in Trece Martires city, police Chief Reynaldo Galang told DZMM radio. Three other people also died, a police spokesman said.

The victims were not immediately identified, police said.

Amid the rubble and smoke, a Roman Catholic priest prayed over the remains of the victims.

Police said about 40 employees were in the fireworks factory at the time of the blast.

An electronics plant in the same compound also was destroyed, said Jennifer Buenviaje, one of the 45 workers who escaped from that factory.

"The first blast was really so loud. Other explosions followed nonstop," she said.

The fireworks factory opened in 1995 and pioneered synchronized music and pyrotechnics in the country.

Rebels: Dev't projects in exchange for hostages

By JIM GOMEZ
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Two al-Qaida-linked militants wanted by Washington have demanded education and development projects for impoverished Muslim communities in exchange for the freedom of three kidnapped Red Cross workers in the southern Philippines, an official said Thursday.

Provincial Vice Governor Lady Ann Sahidulla identified the two Abu Sayyaf commanders as Albader Parad and Abu Pula, whom she met Wednesday along with the three Red Cross workers in a jungle hideout near Jolo Island's Indanan township.

It was the first direct contact by any official with the kidnappers and the Red Cross workers—Andreas Notter, 38, of Switzerland; Eugenio Vagni, 62 of Italy; and Mary Jean Lacaba, 37, of the Philippines—who were snatched from their car at gunpoint on Jan. 15.

Sahidullah said she embraced the three hostages and wept at seeing them apparently well. They were being kept in a small house, given clean water and allowed to use a cell phone and laptop "when there is a signal," she said.

"They were smiling, but of course I could feel their fear and despair," Sahidullah said.

A photo of the meeting showed the three hostages standing with Sahidulla in front of a tangle of coconut trees.

Sahidulla used her personal connections to make contact with the rebel group, who agreed to meet her on a road near Indanan on Wednesday. She hiked with them for an hour to their jungle stronghold.

Sahidullah said she pleaded to take Lacaba back with her, but Parad and Jumdail refused. They assured her the hostages would not be harmed.

"They want livelihood and free education, but did not mention any amount of money," Sahidulla told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. She did not elaborate on what the kidnappers meant by livelihood projects, but said the Abu Sayyaf gunmen told her they would send written demands later.

3 bodies found in Manila, QC

By JEANNETTE ANDRADE, NANCY C. CARVAJAL
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—The bodies of three men believed to have been summarily executed were found in Manila and Quezon City early Thursday morning.

The first body was found at 3:30 a.m. on the southbound lane of the Quezon Bridge in Quiapo, Manila.

Joshua Pelaez and Victor Naverete said they were walking on the bridge pedestrian walkway when they found a huge wooden crate.

Written on top of it was a message that read, "Holdaper ako, huwag niyo ako tularan (I am a holdup man, don't follow my example)."

The two men called the police who, upon opening the crate, found a man whose face was wrapped in packing tape. His hands were also tied.

Scene of the Crime Operatives who examined the body said the victim had been shot in the chest and stabbed several times in the neck.

At noon, a woman went to the police and identified the body was that of her live-in partner—Darwin Pajarillo, 29, a fruit vendor and resident of 922 R. Papa St., in Sampaloc, Manila.

Cristina Lapuz, 27, told Chief Insp. Alberto Peco, head of the Manila Police District's homicide section, that she last saw Pajarillo on Wednesday morning. She denied that the victim was a holdup man but admitted that he was a drug user.

In Quezon City, a tricycle driver stumbled upon the bodies of two men on Mindanao Avenue at 6:30 a.m.

PO3 Joseph Dino, case investigator, said the heads and hands of the victims were wrapped in packing tape.

Their bodies also bore numerous puncture marks, indicating that they were probably stabbed with an ice pick, he added.

Dino said the two men could have been strangled to death because of the gash wounds and marks on their necks.

One of the victims was carrying a residence certificate with the name of Ruben Saavedra, 52, of Agpangan, Quezon province.

The other man was described as between 25 and 30 years old and of medium build.

Both were shirtless and clad only in denim pants.

PHILIPPINE BRIEFS

Brunei sultan commutes OFW death penalty

MANILA, Philippines—The Sultan of Brunei has commuted to life the death sentence of a Filipino worker who was convicted of murder in his country upon the request of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, an official of the Department of Foreign Affairs said. Arroyo requested the commutation of the death sentence of Edgar Puzon in a meeting with Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, foreign affairs undersecretary Esteban Conejos Jr. said. Puzon was sentenced to death in 2003 for the murder of another Filipino worker in Brunei. The sentence was upheld in 2007, said Conejos who was present during the bilateral talks. *(INQUIRER.net)*

3 cops hurt as they fight off NPA attack

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Three policemen were injured while fighting off a band of New People's Army guerrillas who tried to overrun the police station in Tampakan, South Cotabato, the provincial police commander said Friday. Senior Superintendent Robert Kiunisala said an initial report on the incident identified the injured policemen as Police Officer 3 Rolando Rejas, PO3 Alex Bernal, and PO2 Arnando Gresales. Kiunisala said an undetermined number of rebels swooped down on the Tampakan police station at around 11:15 Thursday but alert policemen fought back, forcing the rebels to withdraw after a 30-minute firefight. *(INQUIRER.net)*

Pirates seize Filipino, Indonesian crew

NAIROBI (AFP)—Somali pirates on Thursday hijacked a German cargo vessel with 13 Filipino and Indonesian crew in the Gulf of Aden, a Kenyan maritime official said. "There was a heavy exchange of gunfire (but) the crew is believed to be safe," said Andrew Mwangura who runs the Kenya chapter of the Seafarers Assistance Program.

Roxas to run for president in 2010 exec

MANILA, Philippines—Senator Manuel "Mar" Roxas will run for president in 2010, a party official announced on Friday. At a forum attended by members and key party officials, Cavite Representative Joseph Abaya, LP secretary general, told the crowd that Roxas would run for president. "Tatakbo po ba si Mar Roxas sa 2010? Ang sagot po diyan ay isang malinaw at klaradong opo [Will Mar Roxas run in 2010? The answer is a clear and resounding yes]," Abaya said. "That is my responsibility as secretary general, to ensure that no one will eave this room with doubt, speculation or second thoughts that Mar Roxas will not run in 2010. I hope that is clear with everyone," he said in Filipino. Roxas, the LP president, was not yet in the room when Abaya made his opening statement but was expected at the forum later. Present were Senators Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan and Rodolfo Biazon, LP chairperson and former Senator Franklin Drilon, party director general Chito Gascon, and former congressman Nereus Acosta. *(INQUIRER.net)*

RP economy grew 4.6 percent in 2008

Full-year and Q4 growth rates exceed expectations

AP

A Filipino activist shouts slogans condemning the government for failing to address the growing jobless individuals during a demonstration outside the Philippine Department of Labor and Employment in Manila on Thursday Jan. 29, 2009.

MANILA, Philippines—The economy grew 4.6 percent last year, down from a 30-year high of 7.2 percent in 2007 but slightly higher than government expectations, the government announced Thursday.

In the fourth quarter, the growth in the gross domestic product (GDP) reached 4.5 percent, it said.

The government had expected the financial crisis to depress 2008 growth to 4.2-4.5 percent, and forecast the fourth-quarter growth at 3.6-4.4 percent.

It also announced that it had revised growth in the third quarter to 5.0 percent from the 4.6 percent reported in November.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo lauded the stronger-than-expected growth figures.

"Two-thirds of the world is in recession but we should all be proud that our country is growing at 6.0 percent GNP [gross national product] and 4.6 percent GDP in 2008. Congratulations," she said in a speech at a meeting of her political party.

The full-year growth slowdown showed in all the major sectors: services, to 4.9 percent from 8.1 percent in 2007; industry, to 5.0 percent from 7.1 percent; agriculture — which employs four in 10 Filipinos, and saw a drop in rice and corn output because of typhoons and high fertilizer costs — to 3.2 percent from 4.9 percent.

For this year, the secretary of economic planning said the economic growth target of 3.7-4.7 percent was a "welcome challenge" and the economy would likely weather the impact of the global financial crisis.

Construction will be the key driver of growth "as the government implements fiscal and monetary policy to mitigate the impact of the crisis, our economy is expected to remain resilient and prepared for the eventual economic rebound," Secretary Ralph Recto told reporters.

Recto said the "continuing debacle" in the global economy had taken a toll on Philippine trade, with exports down as shipments of electrical machinery, semiconductors, microcircuits and garments decreased.

He added that between 60,000 and 100,000 jobs were at risk in the "vulnerable sectors."

However, he added, "Our economy is expected to remain resilient and prepared for the eventual economic rebound. I don't expect a recession. There will still be growth."

Vincent Tien You Tsui, economist at Standard Chartered Bank, said that although the economy slowed down in the fourth quarter and might slacken further in 2009, the Philippines could escape outright recession.

"Overall, the Philippines will be better insulated from the collapse of external demand compared with other Asian economies," as exports account for just 32 percent of GDP, he said.

Luz Lorenzo, an economist and market strategist at ATR-KimEng Securities, said the economy got a strong boost from private consumption because of lower commodity prices and increased government spending. ***(With reports from Reuters, Agence France-Presse, Philippine Daily Inquirer, and INQUIRER.net)***

Communist rebels attack Quezon cell site

By DELFIN MALLARI JR.,
JUAN ESCANDOR JR.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LUCENA CITY—Communist rebels attacked another cell site of a telecommunications firm that refuses to pay so-called revolutionary taxes, disrupting cellular phone services to hundreds of thousands of cell phone users.

The rebels set fire to the Globe cell site in Barangay Nalunao in Lucban, Quezon, 160 km south of Manila late Wednesday, police said.

Police said at least six rebels in civilian clothes and black uniforms gained access to the cell site at past 4:00 p.m. by ordering the lone guard at gunpoint to open the cell site compound's gates.

The rebels poured gasoline on pieces of communications equipment in the compound and set them on fire. They fled on foot and headed to Luisiana, a town in Laguna.

In September, a group of communist rebels attacked another Globe relay station located in another village in Lucban.

Late last month, NPA members also burned a Globe cell site in the town of Sampaloc.

The communist guerrillas have intensified attacks on Globe communications towers because of the company's refusal to pay revolutionary taxes.

According to the military, the rebels have lost their traditional sources of funding from overseas after they were listed as foreign terrorist organizations by the United States and the European Union.

In another attack, a group of rebels burned a bus also on Wednesday in Calabanga, Camarines Sur, according to police.

PO3 Artemio Peñalosa said a Raymond Bus was on its way to Manila from Tinambac, Camarines Sur when the rebels flagged it down.

Peñalosa said the rebels ordered the passengers, driver and conductor out of the bus before setting it on fire.

He said police were still questioning the bus driver to get more details of the rebel attack. No one was hurt in the attack, police said.

Magnitude-5.1 quake hits parts of Visayas

MANILA, Philippines—Residents of Pastrana town in Leyte were jolted by magnitude-5.1 earthquake Friday morning, as state seismologists said they expect damages due to the tremor and warned of possible aftershocks.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said the earthquake occurred at 6:44 a.m. and was felt at intensity 6 in Pastrana town, and was also felt at various intensities at parts of Leyte, Northern and Eastern Samar, and Cebu provinces.

Phivolcs said that the quake, which was of tectonic origin, was felt at intensity 5 at Ormoc City and Palo in Leyte and at intensity 4 at La Paz , Dulag, and Abuyog, also in Leyte.

Residents of Mahaplag town in Leyte, meanwhile, felt the tremor at intensity 3 while in Cebu City , Catarman town in Northern Samar, and Borongan, Eastern Samar, it was recorded at intensity 2. ***(GMANews.TV)***

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR MONEY

How to make a spending plan

Editor's Note: This is part of Take Charge of Your Money , a partnership between INQUIRER.net and Citibank to help readers handle their personal finances well.

Question: The year 2009 doesn't seem to be starting out right for me. We just got word that our company will be downsizing, and that means some of us will be let go. People are telling me to make a budget, but I think what I need is not a saving plan, rather a spending plan to know ahead what my bills are. Can you help me make one?—Adel

Answer: Financial experts tell us that this year will be a hard one. Unemployment is on the rise, not just in countries like the US, but also closer to home. News reports say that the contracts of Overseas Filipino workers in Asian countries are not being renewed, and some companies are planning layoffs.

You're not alone in being anxious about losing a job. But add to it the fact that you have bills to pay and if you don't have enough savings, you're in for some belt tightening this year.

This is exactly why you need a spending plan or a budget. A budget is the very tonic many households need. It is a guide to help you be wise about spending so your needs are met foremost.

According to Use Credit Wisely, a booklet published by Citibank Philippines, a budget can help you:

1. take control of your finances
2. keep out of financial trouble
3. become a smarter consumer
4. set and achieve financial goals
5. pave the way to a secure future

A budget doesn't have to be painful or difficult. You should control your budget, not let it control you. To do that, you have to spend some time organizing and planning. Then once you've set a budget, it's easy to maintain.

Here's how to keep a budget, according to Use Credit Wisely:

1. Set your goals. What is important to you? What do you need? What do you want? Group your goals into short-term, mid-term, and long-term ones.

Short-term goals are those that you will achieve within the year. Examples are paying off credit card debt, purchasing a new appliance, or saving for a vacation. Medium-term goals, such as saving up for down payment on a house or buying new furniture, target the next two to five years. Long-term goals go beyond that, such as retirement and college expenses.

2. Gather information. To capture an accurate picture of your finances, find out how much your household income and expenses are monthly. Look at pay slips, income tax returns, checkbook records, credit card statements, payment information for major purchases such as car loans, and financial statements from banks and financial institutions.

Income may include salaries, interest income, dividends, etc. Expenses may be fixed and variable. Fixed expenses do not change, and one example is rent. Variable expenses change monthly, such as food and gas or transportation.

3. Find out where you stand. Total your income and deduct all your expenses, and you will see how you stand financially. This step should give you an idea about your spending habits.

4. Check your bottom line. This will tell you if you are spending too much. If the difference between your income and expenses is positive, you have discretionary income and can use the amount to meet budget goals and for emergencies.

If it is negative, then you are spending way more than you should and are probably living on credit. Go over your expenses and find out where you can cut down.

5. Keep track of expenses. Start listing down all your expenses daily in a small notebook. Carry the notebook with you everywhere. This way you will see where your money goes.

You will be surprised that you can totally do away with some expenses. Examples are ATM fees when you use another bank's ATM, or late fees for not paying your bills on time.

You will also be able to identify where you can lower your expenses. For instance, instead of eating breakfast every morning at a fast-food place, eat breakfast at home or bring baon to work. At P100 a day, those fast-food breakfasts will amount to nearly P24,000 a year. Even "fixed" expenses such as electricity can be lowered. Iron all clothes at the same time and use more energy-efficient light bulbs to decrease your power bill.

If you are keeping spending in control, congratulations! You will be able to meet your financial goals in no time. Now try to improve by reducing a different spending category by 5 to 10 percent.

If you still can't keep to your budget, regain financial control by adjusting your spending. Get your whole family into it. Also, try to increase your income by looking for additional sources. Good luck!

INQUIRER.net and Citibank invite readers to ask questions regarding financial matters. Send your questions to personal_finance@inquirer.net. Readers are solely responsible for their own investment decisions and should thus conduct their own research and due diligence and obtain professional advice. INQUIRER.net will not be liable for any loss or damage caused by a reader's reliance on information obtained from our web site.

Maharlika – PinoyStyle

Rufa Mae is happily single

By DOLLY ANNE CARVAJAL
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Rufa Mae Quinto is happier being unattached. "There are a lot more things you can accomplish when you're free," P-chi muses. "It's hard to be tied down to someone. Hindi ka maka-fly to the highest level. Though I also dream of being someone's wife someday. My biological clock is ticking pero snooze mode muna ang alarm (laughs)."

Such are the sentiments also of Doris, the character she portrays in "Status: Single," which opens Jan 28. Could Jon Avila, one of her leading men, be the one for her? "Remains to be seen," P-chi quips. "Malalim siya. Sometimes I can't read him. I love the way he surprises me all the time. Like he pops up when I'm on a girls' night-out just to say hi and he leaves chocolates with my driver for me."

Ahh! The multiple joys of being single!

Tired of intrigues

Baron Geisler is relieved that all is well between him and Jake Cuenca. Trouble started when Jake confronted Baron because he heard from common friends that Baron allegedly said that he has a gay benefactor, that's why he has many projects.

"We talked things over already," Baron clarifies. "Pinagtatawanan na lang namin 'yung issue. May mga tao lang na gusto kaming guluhin. Na misinterpret lang siguro ako. I'm tired of intrigues. I just want to work because I love my job and I have to put bread on the table and milk in the ref."

Baron wants no more of milking the issues for all it's worth.

Always special

Birthday boy Marvin Agustin laughs off rumors that he plans to court Jolina Magdangal again now that she has split up from Bebong Munoz. "Nakakahiya naman. I don't want to rock the boat," says Marvs. "I just want Jolens to feel that I'm here for her. She will always be special to me but let's leave it at that." When love turns into friendship, some emotions are better left unfelt.

No career move

Jolina clarifies that her breakup with Bebong is not a career move. "I'm old enough to know how not to mix my career and my personal life," Jolens explains. "The reason for our break-up has nothing to do with my career."

Jolens is just like any other girl who loves her work but also works on her love.

Guess list

■ A director got so exasperated with an actress during their shoot for a TV ad. She was supposed to have a long spiel promoting the product. But even after endless rehearsal takes, the actress could not enunciate the words properly. So Direk had no other recourse but to scrap all her lines except one. "Ang ikli na lang nga nung sasabihin niya, palpak pa din," revealed an ad agency insider. "May problem talaga siya sa diction. Kaya no choice yung client. They aired the ad even if they're not exactly satisfied with her way of speaking."

The sought-after actress is better seen than heard. EARitating eye-candy?

■ A modeling world kibitzer insists that the real cause of the breakup of an actor and an actress is a hot male Brazilian model. Nope, Mr. Latin Lover didn't snatch away the actress but the actor! Gay ka na ba? Gay na gay na!

■ A married composer bought his stand-up comedienne mistress a brand new house and a white BMW. BMW for Be My Wife? The comedienne must be laughing all the way to the bank!

Not running

Diether Ocampo declares in his Facebook status that he is happy and inspired. I teased him. "Is it because of the mestiza beauty you were spotted with lately?" Diet blushed. "I'm neither confirming nor denying anything."

What he wants to confirm is that he is not running for public office. "I'd rather help in socio-civic developments, especially for the Muslims in Mindanao."

Diet would rather stick to the politics of love. Will his heart break all the laws for his new inspiration?

Always a friend

Princess Punzalan-Field is one of Rustom Padilla's closest friends. They met up when he was in the US before he decided to "transform" into Bebe Gandanghari.

Cess' e-mail reads: "We were together on my birthday and Christmas Eve. We talked about spirituality and what's happening in our lives. I didn't get to meet Bebe, though. He told me about his plans. I will be his friend whatever happens kasi mahal ko siya!"

Princess Ganda loves Ms Gandanghari. Royal and loyal!

To move or not

Miriam Quiambao is still undecided whether to move to ABS-CBN or not.

"I'm a freelancer right now," she says. "I'm open to offers. The most important consideration is if the job is something I believe in. I would like it to be substantial whether in hosting or acting. I want to host a lifestyle/talk show and do roles with depth and complexity of character. I'm also willing to do comedy to show my versatility."

Reports have it that she's being eyed to be Willie Revillame's new co-host in "Wowowee." Isn't she wary of Willie's "colorful" history with women? "I'll deal with it if and when I get the job," she replies.

With Miriam's charms and talent, she's overqualified for any dream job. But as I always tell my girlfriends like her: Don't work too hard. Just play harder to get!

Five in one

Christian Bautista is all agog for "Pop Icons" (Feb. 21 at the Big Dome). It's the very first time that Christian, Piolo Pascual, Sam Milby, Mark Bautista and Erik Santos will be together in one concert.

"Since we are all good friends and also producers of the show, we will make sure not to upstage each other," says Christian.

Isn't he wary that it could tickle the crazy imagination of some quarters and fuel nasty "gay" rumors? "We don't let such issues affect us because it's simply not true. We are all secure in who we are."

Put no color to their friendship. Instead let the pop icons color your night with their awesome music.

Tattooed ankles

Raymart Santiago and Claudine Barretto had the name of their baby Santino tattooed on their ankles. When the proud parents play with Santino, they would go "Coochie Coochie Coo Tattoo."

Snooky's passions

By BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR.
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MANILA, Philippines—Amid the hustle and bustle of the recent holiday season, actress-turned-businesswoman Snooky Serna confessed that she found the most relaxing haven in a most unusual place: the kitchen.

"Last Christmas, I invented new dishes," she said. "My favorites are adobo, beef steak and sinigang. I also have my own special recipe of tamarind chicken."

She related that her maternal grandmother, "Mama" Isabel Buenaflor, was her teacher.

"I used to be her little assistant in the kitchen," Snooky related.

She seldom gets to cook these days, though, busy as she is with various tasks.

On top of her jewelry and perfume ventures, she is also apprenticing in her boyfriend RJV's manpower business, learning the ropes.

"I want to be of help [to him]. I meet with his clients who are mostly from other countries," she said.

Snooky will visit Malaysia next month—her first official business trip abroad.

She admitted that her businessman-boyfriend has brought a certain measure of stability in her life.

Which is precisely what she needs, she said, since she is constantly on the road, "meeting with people, closing deals and shuttling between two homes."

"He gives me a reality check," she said of RJV. "He can be encouraging, but he can also be brutally honest. He's very cerebral and his business sense rubs off on me."

They share a passion for beautiful things, like Lladro angel figures and ancient trinkets from all over the world—mostly mementos from her boyfriend's numerous travels abroad.

Now that they're starting to go on business trips together, they're planning to bring home lots of souvenirs, too.

RJV is likewise her staunchest supporter in the jewelry and fragrance businesses, Snooky Serna Exclusives and Icon Collection, respectively (available on her website, www.snookyserna.net).

In the course of this conversation, it was he who pointed out that many of her jewelry pieces and scents were sold during the holiday season.

"We joined bazaars in Makati and Ortigas," she said.

In RJV's home, which also serves as her work space, Snooky often spends the day drawing and whipping up jewelry designs.

"When I'm inspired I can turn out lots of new concepts in a day," she said.

Among her current favorite pieces are the floral necklaces, earrings and rings from her Garden Collection. "I like simple yet intricate designs. We get stones from abroad, like Myanmar."

Apart from top-billing indie movies like "Paupahan," "Kiss Me, Mananaggal Me," "Fidel," and the forthcoming "Pananamantala kay Rosa" and "Dukot," Snooky is also putting together a book.

"The title is 'The Healing Heart.' It's based on my personal experiences. My personal journey. It will feature my poetry and drawings, as well as the art works of my boyfriend's children, Patricia and Ralph."

She said the kids are talented artists.

With Ralph, she shares an advocacy, the Cheers Paramedic School.

"It empowers people to save lives. Ralph is the youth ambassador of Cheers. I'm proud of his kids," she said. "I would never try to replace their mom, but I'm glad that RJV and his kids welcomed my two daughters, Sam and Sachi, with open arms."

She looks forward to lazy days, when they hang out in the living room—another fave nook.

"This is the children's house more than anyone else's," she noted. "I love it when they are all here—watching TV, doing their homework on the computer. This is their busy area."

To this flurry of activities, Snooky adds her own obsessions: poetry, drawing and jewelry design.

Maharlika – Opinyon

EDITORIAL

The President's men

Anyone halfway attentive to current goings-on would raise an eyebrow at the number of ex-military and police officials occupying posts of stature and influence in the Arroyo administration—and be convinced that, true to the ways of power, Ms Arroyo means not only to reward her tested lieutenants but also to ensure their loyalty.

There are at least 25 of them led by the Little President himself, Eduardo Ermita.

They hold Cabinet portfolios (Leandro Mendoza of transportation, Hermogenes Ebdane of public works, Angelo Reyes of energy); ambassadorships (Ernesto de Leon to Australia, Efren Abu to the BIMP-East ASEAN Growth Area, Vidal Querol to Indonesia, Generoso Senga to Iran); and plum posts (Narcisco Abaya at the Bases Conversion Development Authority, Edgardo Espinosa at the Manila Economic and Cultural Office, Thelmo Cunanan at the Social Security System, Glenn Rabonza at the Office of Civil Defense, Roberto Lastimoso at the Metro Rail Transit Corp.).

They carry important titles (Roy Cimatu is Ms Arroyo's special envoy, Honesto Isleta her assistant on strategic information). They rule over critical areas (Angel Atutubo at the Manila International Airport Authority). They advise the President on peace (Hermogenes Esperon and Avelino Razon).

Thus are they positioned in the scheme of things, all helping resurrect the Marcos-era militarist culture, their appointments blithely encroaching on career offices or requiring the creation of a new satrapy (such as the National Counter Terrorism Action Group for Arturo Lomibao).

What now takes the cake is the appointment of Tirso Danga to the helm of the National Printing Office (the chair of which was accused of raping a child and was subsequently sacked). The appointment particularly rankles because Danga, a retired vice admiral, is implicated in the "Hello, Garci" election fraud scandal that was exposed in 2005 and has since been crying for resolution—and the NPO is in charge of the government's printing requirements including election forms and other poll documents. (Connecting the dots hardly needs a background in rocket science.)

On top of all that is the recent bit of news apparently meant to test the waters: Jovito Palparan for the Dangerous Drugs Board, perhaps to complement Dionisio Santiago at the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency.

Palparan redux is a horrific possibility for those who have linked the so-called "butcher" to the death and torture of numerous activists. But ultimately, it will be an unsurprising feather in the cap of a man after the President's own heart, and on whom she has heaped fulsome praise.

Of traitors and heroes

Glimpses

By JOSE MA. MONTELIBANO
INQUIRER.NET

It is not difficult to talk about traitors. There are so many of them around, easy to spot because they usually hold positions of power or hold great wealth. The worst traitors come from the Church and the State, both being the dominant and domineering institutions of the country over the past 400 years. The Church and the State are natural sources of vision and virtue, of courage and heroism, of nobility and purity. When they live up to their highest calling, an enlightened society is born and raised.

The story of the Philippines, however, is a story of failure of leadership. In a democracy, the failure of society may mean the failure of the citizenry. "For the people, by the people, of the people" is more than a democratic principle, it is democracy's fundamental philosophy. That is why I cannot point to the people as the culprit for the massive poverty and corruption that shame the nation. Our poverty is not a choice — it is an inherited status, a curse from birth. Corruption stems from abuse and exploitation of power, and the people are its victims, not beneficiaries.

The State in colonial times used force to rob the people of their land and loot the country of its resources. The Church at that time shared in the loot and cooperated with the State to manipulate the native population into submission. There is little need for me to retell an old story. I am not a historian, only a student of history. And if our history were not so crucial to our present, I would prefer to simply move on in cadence with time.

Today, however, is a special moment when history and the present meet to reconcile and change a course, or agree to continue a path where a people's soul wallows in slavery and darkness. After more than twenty years, another moment emerges with a special invitation for courage and faith. Once again, change knocks loudly in the hearts of Filipinos, asking to come in, bearing messages of encouragement from America.

When slavery has been one's reality for centuries, it conditions the mind and spirit to cope by first resigning to it, and eventually by accepting it as a natural state of life. It used to be that parents of poor families would dissuade their children from even imaging a better life. It was, for those parents, simply fantasy to do so as life would never allow such a shift from poverty to comfort or abundance. Ambition was not only useless, it actually was dangerous. Ambition only got the poor into trouble with the Church and the State who were always vigilant against their subjects hoping and dreaming.

We must remember history, not only the events and the special personalities but also the effects of it that we carry to the present. If change seems to come so slowly, this is only a direct result of a history that has so deeply embedded submission and resignation in the psyche of ordinary and poor Filipinos. Those among us who clamor for change would do well to understand the process and effect of colonial times, to understand the exploitative nature of the Church and the State all those centuries. Once we do, we can design a mechanism to deconstruct the imposed horizon blanketing a captive's mind and ultimately allow the rainbow to inspire a benighted people to follow the light.

In a democracy, government is the one tasked not only to govern but to lead and inspire. In a religion, the church is expected to nurture and to pastor. In the Philippines, however, both government and church have failed miserably as institutions in their mandated roles. What has saved the day for them are pockets of good workers on the ground, public officials who defy the collective look of graft and abuse by their sincere and dedicated service, priests and nuns who shun the pomp of position and protocol and instead take the posture of washing the feet of the poor.

Where government and church as institutions have oftentimes been traitors to their higher calling, ordinary workers among them have been heroes and have carried the day for them. Even when whole institutions become corrupt, the light of a few honest and courageous members can continue to provide hope to an exploited society. Because we have many traitors who keep Filipinos in the dark, who abdicate the empowerment of the many for fear of losing historical advantages, we need the heroes who will stand on firm ground, who will stay rooted in righteousness despite the corrupt environment.

When we have heroes to point to, they become sources of light. I have found many in my life, a "barangay" [village] chairman here and there, a mayor here and a governor there, an honest treasurer, a determined teacher. They have been sources of light. The Church in the Philippines has her own heroes, even a few martyrs. There are those parish priests who defy their own poverty and always have something for the poorest in their areas. And who can discount the many religious orders of nuns who truly mother their flock as their way of life.

Treachery has brought poverty to a land of abundance. It is treachery against public duty, against morals and ethics. It is treachery against the teachings of Christ whose disciples in the Philippines have not been faithful reflections of. How can a godly gift of abundance be cornered by the greedy in a land where religion teaches love and sacrifice giving as its primordial virtues? But in the face of the worst distortion and perversion of democracy and Christianity, heroes have not been bullied to squat and be quiet. To those heroes we owe so much, maybe even everything thus far.

Thus far, only thus far. Heroism is not only for the rich, the powerful, the learned. Heroism is a birthright, a forgotten one for most, but always there as a choice for each of us. We have relied on our heroes for so long but mistook their roles as saviors when they served most of all as inspiration for our own heroism to awaken. Heroes save, but heroes inspire, guide and empower us to be heroes ourselves. This is the invitation of change—for us to be heroes in this moment of history. Change is not a call for higher incomes, for more economic opportunities. Change is a call for heroes to save their motherland. Change is a call to be brave, and then for the brave to serve as models of virtue, of generosity and courage, of faith and patriotism.

Confucius: "Cowardice is seeing what is right, and failing to do it."

Images, names from the Spanish conquest

Looking Back

By AMBETH OCAMPO
PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Miguel Lopez de Legazpi (1502-1572) is best remembered in the Philippines for the two places that bear his name: Legaspi City in the Bicol region and Legazpi Village in the Makati commercial and business district. If you scan the names of the posh Makati subdivisions, you will discover that with the exception of Forbes Park, which is named after American governor-general William Cameron Forbes, these places are associated with the Spanish conquest: Magallanes is named after Ferdinand Magellan; Urdaneta is named after Fray Andres de Urdaneta, the Augustinian friar who navigated the Legazpi expedition; Dasmariñas (who also has his name in Binondo and Cavite) is named after Governor General Gomez Perez Dasmariñas who was murdered by Chinese rowers during a ship mutiny; and Salcedo is named after Diego de Salcedo, governor general during 1663-1668.

Even in our nationalist times, we rarely had gated communities named after the Filipino contemporaries of the above Spaniards. With the exception of Sikatuna Village in Quezon City, I have yet to see Lakandula Village, Tupas Towers, Humabon Court, or Rajah Matanda Condominium. Is this lapse due to the way we were taught our history? Or maybe the ancient Filipino names do not have the same selling point as the Spanish names?

Offhand there are only two things I remember about Legazpi from my school history: First, that it was he who finally brought Spanish dominion over the Philippines, a project left unfinished after Magellan was killed in Mactan in 1521; second, that aside from the resistance from the natives, his biggest threat was the Portuguese. Our history books tell us that during the so-called "Age of Discovery," two countries competed for the lands unknown to the West during the late 15th and early 16th centuries. Spain and Portugal were sending fleets to Asia in search of spices. Pope Alexander VI mediated in this rivalry by cutting the world in half like an orange and gave one half to Spain, and the other half to Portugal. In this arbitrary demarcation, the Philippines unfortunately fell on the Portuguese side. How we remained Spanish is subject for a future column.

One of the relics of this rivalry is the venerated image of the Nuestra Señora de Guia (Our Lady of Guidance), the image of the Virgin Mary venerated by the faithful in Manila's Ermita district. Both Paul VI and John Paul II prayed at her shrine when they visited the Philippines. Like the Santo Niño de Cebu that was found by one of Legazpi's men in 1565, the Virgin was found in what is now Ermita by one of Legazpi's men in 1571. According to the late 17th-century "Anales Eclesiasticos de Philipinas" the image was found after a hard battle for Manila between Legazpi's men and those of Soliman.

A soldier walking along the shore of what is now Manila Bay found the miraculous image of Nuestra Señora de Guia on the center foliage of a pandan tree. It is said that the natives had built a quaint wooden temple for the image where it was transferred a little beyond the place where it was originally found. Where did this image come from? Who brought it to Manila?

One story is that the image was brought to the Philippines by the Magellan expedition, together with the Santo Niño de Cebu, perhaps, one of the three images shown to Humabon and his wife in 1521. Of the three—a crucifix, an image of the Virgin and the Santo Niño—the newly baptized Queen Juana asked for the Santo Niño. The image of the Virgin, if it is indeed the same image, is believed to have been given to the rulers of Manila as a present from the rulers of Cebu.

Another version is that the image, carved from the Philippine hardwood, molave, with its distinctive Asian rather than Western features, was made by pre-Spanish Filipinos and venerated as a "likha," a "diwata," perhaps even an "anito." I visit Ermita often to pray, but I cannot get the historian out of me and end up gazing at the Virgin pondering her origins. You can't see her up close because she is high up on the main altar of Ermita church; we cannot determine from this vantage point how many times she has been painted and restored over the centuries. We see very little of the image, its wooden body obscured by elaborate embroidered finery. It would be impolite, even sacriligeous, for me to request to see the Virgin naked, so I just have to go by hearsay. Underneath her robes the image is not an anito, as nationalist historians would want us to believe; it is definitely a Roman Catholic image of the Virgin of the Immaculate Conception, an image of Mary without the baby.

To complicate matters, a Portuguese historian visiting the Philippines in the 1970s claimed the Virgin of Ermita resembled that of yet another similar image, also in a place called La Hermita (The Hermitage), overlooking Macao. Was the image brought by the Portuguese to Manila? If Legazpi had as much as acknowledged that Christianity was already planted in Manila before his arrival, with this image of the Virgin as proof, the admission would have strengthened the Portuguese claim to the Philippines. All this is now past history under the bridge, but the fact that relics and antiquities can make us rethink what we think we already know and move us to review the records broadens our view and understanding of an oversimplified textbook about the past, which has enough complexity to keep us thinking for the next five centuries.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu.

Samu't Sari

TWIN CELEBRATION

Iyanah Ranin is christened at Mount Carmel Church on Jan. 18, 2009, while her brother, Ian Ranin, also celebrates his 7th birthday on the same date. Both celebrants are shown here with their parents at the Gourmet Restaurant in Garapan for the celebration.

REY BELGADO

Adrian and Wilma Ranin, parents of Ian and Iyanah Ranin, pose with their guests for a souvenir photo.

REY BELGADO

The ninongs and ninangs have their picture taken with Iyanah Ranin after her christening at Mount Carmel Church on Jan. 18, 2009.

REY BELGADO

Ian Ranin celebrates his 7th birthday at the Gourmet Restaurant in Garapan.

REY BELGADO

HAPPY RETIREMENT

Best wishes and happy retirement to Mrs. Pagapular! Thank you for all your hard work for our school and most especially our students. It is teachers like you that make learning worthwhile. We will truly miss you! From Lori, Jan, Lorraine, Carol, Lawrence, and the GES staff.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

FIRST BIRTHDAY

REY BELGADO

Jyro Cruz celebrates his first birthday on Jan. 26, 2009, at his parents' residence in Garapan. He is shown here with his mom, Angel Cruz, Jing, Jare, and Eve.

Guests have their picture taken with the birthday celebrant, Jyro Cruz.

REY BELGADO

SWEET 62

MARK RABAGO

Tropex Garden Co. and Trader's Insurance owner Lito Mendoza blows his candles during his 62nd birthday celebration last Sunday at the Gentle Brook Café in Susupe. Looking on are his wife Malou and daughter Chandle.

Friends, family, and other well-wishers pose for a photo with birthday celebrant Lito Mendoza.

MARK RABAGO

Lito Mendoza and his wife Malou.

MARK RABAGO

YoungStyle

Kids, parents and teachers disagree on how much homework is too much

By VALERIE STRAUSS
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

Backpack bulging, worksheets galore, read this, study that ... all after seven hours in school already.

HOMEWORK.

If you think kids are the only ones who disagree with teachers about the need for homework, you may be surprised to learn that many parents don't like homework any more than their kids do.

A new survey shows that parents and teachers don't always agree on why homework is assigned—or how involved parents should be in helping their kids get it done.

Ask kids about the dreaded "H" word and you'll hear something similar to what Sabrina Martin, a third-grader at Wood Acres Elementary School in Bethesda, Md., told us.

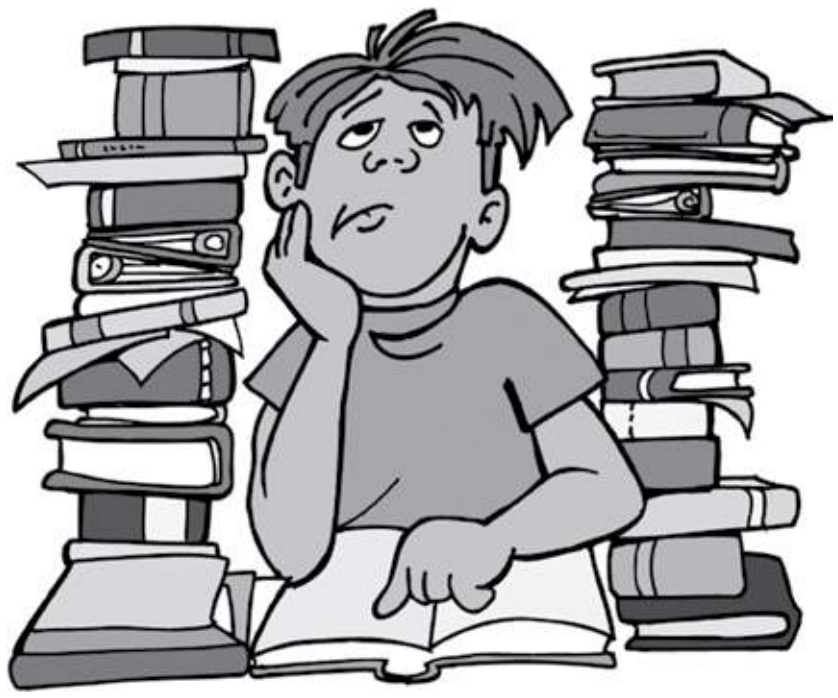
"I'd rather not do it, but I know I have to," said Sabrina, 8.

Teachers say homework is important in the learning process and can help kids develop study and organizational skills. They say kids need to practice what they've learned in school so that the material sticks in their brain.

Some teachers say they give homework to get parents involved in the learning process. "My hope is that they will have a conversation with their kids about the homework so it is not just a drill," said Sue Ann Gleason, a first-grade teacher at Cedar Lane Elementary School in Ashburn, Va.

There is a big debate among educators about how much homework, and what kind of homework, really helps kids learn.

Harris Cooper is a professor of education and psychology at Duke University who is an expert on homework. He said there is very little evidence that most homework in elementary school helps kids learn.



HOMEWORK HISTORY

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

For parts of the 20th century, many educators in the United States thought homework was bad for children, and some school systems even banned it!

Source: *www.family-homework-answers.com/history-of-homework.html*

Reading is important, he said. There are some studies showing that kids in grades 2 through 5 do better on tests when they complete short assignments that practice basic skills that will be on the test, he said.

Those skills can be in any subject, he said, including math and spelling. Young kids should not get homework in areas that haven't been completely explained in school.

But a survey of parents and teachers showed that many parents believe teachers give homework to kids on subjects they haven't learned well in school.

In fact, 68 percent of the parents surveyed said that teachers use homework to cover material they haven't had time to teach in class. Only 17 percent of teachers said that is why they assign homework.

The survey also showed that a lot of parents wish they were less involved in homework. But most teachers don't think parents are involved enough.

Sabrina said she doesn't ask her parents to help her much at all—and that's the way her teacher wants it.

"We are not allowed to ask our parents" for help, Sabrina said, "unless it is a challenge. She wants to see what we can do by ourselves."

One of the big homework issues is exactly how much makes sense to help kids learn.

Researcher Cooper says studies show that up until fifth grade, homework should be very limited. Kids in middle school shouldn't be spending more than 90 minutes a night on homework. In high school, the limit is two hours, Cooper says.

Cooper also has a little advice for elementary school teachers doling out homework to kids: Make the assignments fun. Teacher Gleason agrees.

"The best homework is when I choose a piece of literature for a particular child because it will tickle his or her funny bone," she said. "Learning should be fun."

The homework disconnect

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

Some of the results of an online survey of U.S. parents and teachers show they have different views of homework:

PARENTS

35 percent: Parents who wish they did not have to be involved in homework as much as they are.

31 percent: Parents who said that their school did not offer any type of homework help (informal, formal, free, after-school study clubs or tutoring)

TEACHERS

62 percent: Teachers who say that parents should be more involved in homework.

19 percent: Teachers who said that their schools did not offer homework help .

Sources: Sylvan Learning, National Education Association

(Sylvan Learning is the leading provider of in-center and live, online tutoring at home to students of all ages, grades and skill levels. The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing 3.2 million elementary and secondary teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals and school administrators.)

Cardinals hope to end Cinderella season with one last win

Anyone who picked the Arizona Cardinals to be in the Super Bowl before the 2008 National Football League season started last September, raise your hand.

Be honest. ... Hmmm. ... I don't see many hands out there.

That's because almost no one, including me, thought the Cardinals would get near Super Bowl XLIII. The football experts at Sports Illustrated predicted the Cardinals would finish with a record of 6 wins and 10 losses. Going into Sunday's game, they have 12 wins and 7 losses.

So it's a shocker that Arizona is lining up against the Pittsburgh Steelers in Tampa, Fla.

AP

Arizona Cardinals wide receiver Larry Fitzgerald, right, runs past teammate Sean Morey during drills at football practice at the Tampa Bay Buccaneers training facility Thursday, Jan. 29, 2009, in Tampa, Fla.

After all, the Cardinals have not won an NFL championship since 1947, when they were the Chicago Cardinals. And the team has had one winning season since moving to Arizona from St. Louis in 1988.

So can the Cardinals pull off another upset and beat the mighty Steelers (14 wins, 4 losses), who are going for a record sixth Super Bowl championship? There are three reasons the Cardinals might surprise the Steelers.

Larry Fitzgerald: The Cardinals' star wide receiver has become the Tiger Woods of the NFL, a special player who is head and shoulders above the rest of the league. Fitzgerald caught 96 passes for 1,431 yards and 12 touchdowns during the season.

By FRED BOWEN
Special to The Washington Post

Bowen is an author of sports novels for kids.

In the playoffs, he was even better. In three games, Fitzgerald grabbed 23 passes for 419 yards and five touchdowns. Even though the Steelers have the best defense in the NFL, they might have trouble stopping the fabulous Fitzgerald.

Kurt Warner: The Cardinals' veteran quarterback is used to the Super Bowl pressure. Warner was the most valuable player in Super Bowl XXXIV, when his St. Louis Rams defeated the Tennessee Titans, 23-16, and Warner threw for more than 400 yards and two touchdowns.

Warner had a great 2008 season, completing 67 percent of his passes and throwing for more than 4,500 yards. At 37 years old, Warner is not very good at running away from tacklers, but he still has a strong, accurate throwing arm. If the Cardinals' offensive linemen give him enough time, Warner will find his talented receivers.

The weather: The forecast for Sunday in Tampa is for no rain, mild temperatures and very little wind. Why is that so important? Because the Cardinals and Kurt Warner love to throw the ball. If the weather is nice, instead of wet or windy, that will give the Cardinals a better chance to rack up some big plays through the air.

Do I really think the Cardinals will win? Nope. I think the Steelers will pull out a close one, 30-24.

But you'd better watch the game. Like everyone else, I've been wrong about the Cardinals before.

SUPER BOWL XLIII

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

Who: Arizona Cardinals vs. Pittsburgh Steelers
Where: Raymond James Stadium, Tampa, Fla.
When: Sunday, 6 p.m.

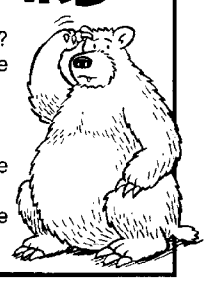
SUPER BOWL FACT

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

Probably the biggest upset in Super Bowl history was in 1969, when the New York Jets, led by quarterback Joe Namath, beat the heavily favored Baltimore Colts. Namath guaranteed that the Jets would win, and they did, 16-7.

RIDDLE CARD

1. When are boys like bears?
2. What is history's favorite fruit?
3. What hobby do broken bones take up?
4. What nut has a hole in the middle?
5. Why is a crossword puzzle like a quarrel?



Answers: 1. When bare-footed. 2. Dates. 3. They knit. 4. A doughnut. 5. Because one word leads to another.

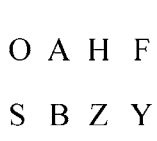
Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

M	L	O	H	K	C	O	T	S	A	F	L	E	B	
A	M	S	T	E	R	D	A	M	F	T	D	S	E	
K	C	U	R	B	S	N	N	I	D	I	R	P	R	
B	U	C	H	A	R	E	S	T	N	U	G	A	N	
S	E	V	I	L	L	E	L	B	O	N	E	R	G	
S	A	P	L	Y	M	O	U	T	H	E	C	I	N	
N	I	L	R	E	B	R	U	S	S	E	L	S	R	
D	I	J	O	N	G	F	L	O	R	E	N	C	E	

Illustrated by David Coulson

A STEEPLE STUMPER! If it takes six seconds for the town hall clock to strike four, how long does it take to strike twelve o'clock midnight?



Answer: Twenty-two seconds. After the first initial strike, there is a two-second interval between each succeeding strike.

A EUROPEAN TOUR!

Hidden in the diagram above are the names of 16 European cities. They can be found by reading up or down, or side to side. You'll even find them diagonally going up or down. Letters can be used more than once. Listed below are the cities you're looking for.

Amsterdam	Grenoble
Belfast	Innsbruck
Berlin	Nice
Bern	Paris
Brussels	Plymouth
Bucharest	Seville
Dijon	Stockholm
Florence	Tours

FIND-A-WORD! On the top line is our mystery word. You need to fill in the missing letters. Clue words (smaller words contained in letter-by-letter order within the mystery word) are defined below.

1. An inclined surface.
2. Unit of electrical current.
3. To study for a test.
4. To force into place.

C				P
	1.			
		2.		
3.				
	4.			

Answers: 1. Ramp. 2. Amp. 3. Cram. 4. Ram. Mystery word: Cramp.

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Betta fish didn't have to die

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I'm writing regarding the column about the children who didn't take care of their pet fish. It seems to me that the consequence of failing to take care of the Betta fish was that the fish died. Teaching the kids to be responsible is a wonderful thing; the parent was not being responsible.

I didn't see the original letter, but apparently the fish wasn't being fed. The mother should've put it in her routine to accompany the kids daily to their pet-care chores and verify they were being accomplished. If the kids didn't want to do those chores, she could've given the fish away. And if she was unable to fit overseeing the pet care into her schedule, she should have never gotten the fish in the first place.

I'm not accusing the mother of intentional animal cruelty, but definitely of being irresponsible. How can she teach responsibility when she wasn't responsible herself? In the long run, if neglect is the cause of the fish's death, she, not the children, is responsible.

On the positive side, she is correct to not allow the kids to have another pet. Good for her on that count.—Beth

BETH: That's a sensible answer, Beth, and thanks. I got quite a few letters on this issue, many fairly hysterical. While I don't condone the death of a pet due to neglect, I'm also quite sure the mother felt badly about what happened. If she didn't, she wouldn't have asked me for advice on getting another pet.

That leaves one remaining question for my readers: How can her children prove to her that they are ready for another pet?

■ ■ ■

Send your tips, questions and comments to Paw's Corner, c/o King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or e-mail them to pawscorner@hotmail.com.

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Strange BUT TRUE

By Samantha Weaver

■ Herpetologists can tell you that of all the victims of rattlesnake bites, only about half of them actually hear the telltale rattle before being bitten.

■ It was famed Elizabethan playwright William Shakespeare who made the following sage observation: "Beauty is all very well at first sight; but whoever looks at it when it has been in the house three days?"

■ The "Guinness Book of World Records" used to have a category for how many live goldfish a person could eat at once, but it was eliminated. Interestingly, the reason for the elimination had nothing to do with cruelty to animals, but rather had to do with the difficulty of preventing cheating. It seems that some would-be competitors were breeding smaller and smaller fish for consumption.

■ The word "alimony" is derived from the Latin word "alimonia," which means "nourishment."

■ Those who study such things say that the month in which you are most likely to be shot, strangled or poisoned is December. They don't seem to venture an opinion regarding why, however.

■ On average, British women are shorter than women in the United States.

■ Who among us isn't familiar with the line, "Quoth the Raven, nevermore"? As virtually anyone who made it through middle-school English class can tell you, it's from Edgar Allan Poe's classic poem "The Raven." Considering the ubiquitous nature of the work, though, you might be surprised to learn that Poe earned a grand total of $9 from the first publication of the poem.

■ The brain of an ostrich is actually smaller than one of its eyes.

■ ■ ■

Thought for the Day: "Bureaucrats write memoranda both because they appear to be busy when they are writing and because the memos, once written, immediately become proof that they were busy."—Charles Peters

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MAGIC MAZE ● THE WIZARD OF OZ

V	O	D	L	J	G	O	K	E	B	Y	W	U	R	P
N	K	I	R	Y	D	H	S	O	G	D	B	Z	X	V
S	Q	S	C	A	R	E	C	R	O	W	O	M	K	I
G	E	C	N	A	Z	N	I	L	E	B	Y	W	U	S
Q	P	R	N	I	L	I	E	V	U	P	0	J	H	F
E	O	C	A	Y	K	X	W	H	O	G	P	0	V	U
T	S	Q	P	A	N	H	M	E	E	M	S	I	9	K
O	A	D	N	I	L	G	C	J	H	L	9	S	L	1
T	T	S	E	W	N	A	M	N	I	T	C	3	I	S
O	A	H	F	E	M	E	T	N	U	A	C	N	9	M
S	B	Z	Y	H	T	O	R	O	D	M	Y	X	U	1

Find the listed words in the diagram. They run in all directions - forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

1900 book	Glinda	Scarecrow	Tornado
1939 movie	Kansas	Slippers	Toto
Aunt Em	Miss Gulch	The Wizard	Uncle Henry
Dorothy	Munchkins	Tin Man	

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GO FIGURE! by Linda Thistle

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

DIFFICULTY: ★★★

★ Moderate ★★ Difficult
★★★ GO FIGURE!

	–		x		15
÷		x		x	
	x		+		8
+		–		+	
	+		÷		5
15		17		13	

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 7 8

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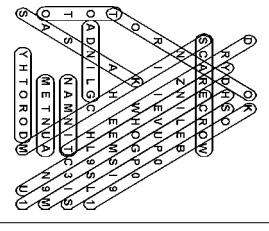
MAGIC MAZE ANSWER



GO FIGURE ANSWER

	13		17		15
5	3	÷	7	+	8
	+		–		+
8	2	+	6	x	1
	x		x		÷
15	5	x	4	–	7

A house for your feathered friends

Not all birds fly south for the winter! Identify the feathered friends that frequent your neighborhood and then make a birdhouse with your family using simple supplies such as a cardboard milk carton and nature finds. When it's done, it's so rewarding to look out a window on a winter's day and see a bird or two perched on the birdhouse your family has made together.

You and your kids will love crafting this fanciful birdhouse because it offers so many possibilities without a saw, hammer or woodworking equipment. Here's how to create one in four easy steps:

1) Rinse out and dry a half-gallon juice or milk carton. Staple the carton shut along the top. An adult may cut out a circle about 1-1/2 inches in diameter on one of the side panels of the carton, 3 inches above the base of the carton.

2) For a perch for the birds, poke a small hole below the large hole. Poke a matching hole in the opposite side of the carton, then insert a 6-inch-long wooden dowel or smooth sturdy stick through both small holes.

3) It's time to decorate! Using a low-temperature glue gun or just regular household glue and a brush, start applying twigs, pieces of bark, dried pods, leaves, etc., wherever your imagination says they belong. You might add a few plastic trinkets or an old silk flower or two if the space seems right.

4) Punch a hole in the top of the house. Loop a piece of wire or twine through the hole and hang the house from a tree branch or a fence post. You're done! Watch as birds discover the new abode.

"The grandkids are coming!" tip: Young grandchildren might enjoy making a treat for the birds. Take a pine cone, roll it around in peanut butter until it's completely covered, then roll it once more in birdseed. Tie a string around it and hang it from a tree branch.

■ ■ ■

Donna Erickson's award-winning television series "Donna's Day" airs on public television nationwide. Visit www.donnasday.com to find out when it airs on your local PBS station and to sign up for Donna's e-newsletter.

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Distributed by King Features Synd.

Life & Style

Springsteen promises high-energy halftime show

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Anybody who thinks it's tough playing the halftime show at the Super Bowl with 150 million people watching should try serenading Barack Obama with the majestic granite visage of Abraham Lincoln staring over your shoulder.

Bruce Springsteen did.

"It kind of was a good warm-up for this," Springsteen joked Thursday after arriving in Tampa with the E Street Band. "That takes some of the pressure off, you know."

In his first news conference in more than 20 years, The Boss was as cool as ever.

Wearing black jeans, a black crewneck sweater and black boots, Springsteen and his band charmed a standing-room-only crowd by joking about his lack of football knowledge, that the group is still together—and its members still alive—and the tremendous year he's having personally and professionally. "Is there anybody from New Jersey? Don't give them the microphone!" the Garden State native called out before taking questions in his first large forum since a 1987 news conference for Amnesty International.

But Springsteen has reason to celebrate.

His song, "The Wrestler," from the movie of the same name, won a Golden Globe earlier this month, and he followed it with a performance at the National Mall to honor Obama two days before the inauguration. Springsteen was a huge Obama booster during the campaign.

His latest CD, "Working on a Dream," was released Tuesday, and he'll kick off a world tour in San Jose, Calif., on April 1.

"Good times," the 59-year-old rocker smiled. "You just have years where things happen, or years where it's quieter. But what's special for me right now is I really believe our band is going through sort of a golden age. We've made three of what I think are some of our best records in a row, which is really one of the reasons we're here. And the band, on the last tour, played the best it's ever played.

"We've been on the road awhile. We're some old soldiers. But the band is still really burning, and I really want people to know about the record. Good year, you know? It's been great."

So now the band plays Sunday's halftime show of the Super Bowl, which is enjoying a run of booking major talent for the roughly 15-minute slot before the largest television event in the nation. Acts have recently included the Rolling Stones, U2, Paul McCartney, Prince and Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers.

The NFL said last year's halftime show with Petty was watched by more than 148 million viewers in the U.S.

Springsteen, for years, had turned down invitations to play the Super Bowl, unsure of the legitimacy of such a performance. After all, for many years the halftime show was made up of local and college marching bands and drill teams.

AP

NFL football Super Bowl XLIII halftime performer Bruce Springsteen speaks at a news conference Thursday, Jan. 29, 2009, in Tampa, Fla.

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Taken

Friday		4:30	7:15	9:55
Saturday	1:25	4:30	7:15	9:55
Sunday	1:25	4:30	7:15	
Mon and Tues		4:30	7:15	

Liam Neeson, Maggie Grace
Action, Drama, Thriller • Rated PG 13

Synopsis

Former government operative Bryan Mills begins the longest 96-hours of his life--and the hunt for the fearsome organization that has taken his daughter Kim. Mills had only recently given up his government career as what he calls a "preventer" to be near Kim, who lives with Bryan's ex-wife Lenore and her new husband. To make ends meet, Bryan joins some former colleagues for special security details (like guarding a pop diva), but most of his time and energy are spent re-connecting with Kim.

★ ★ ★

Inkheart

Friday		4:05	7:25	9:45
Saturday	1:20	4:05	7:25	9:45
Sunday	1:20	4:05	7:25	
Mon and Tues		4:05	7:25	

Brendan Fraser, Helen Mirren
Adventure, Fantasy • Rated PG

Synopsis

Mortimer "Mo" Folchart and his 12-year-old daughter, Meggie, share a passion for books. What they also share is an extraordinary gift for bringing characters from books to life when they read aloud. But there is a danger: when a character is brought to life from a book, a real person disappears into its pages. On one of their trips to a secondhand book shop, Mo hears voices he hasn't heard for years, and when he locates the book they're coming from, it sends a shiver up his spine.

Paul Blart, Mall Cop

Friday		4:20	7:05	10:00
Saturday	1:05	4:20	7:05	10:00
Sunday	1:05	4:20	7:05	
Mon and Tues		4:20	7:05	

Kevin James, Jayma Mays
Comedy • Rated PG

Synopsis

A single, suburban dad tries to make ends meet as a security officer at a New Jersey mall. It's a job he takes very seriously, though no one else does. When Santa's helpers at the mall stage a coup, shutting down the megaplex and taking hostages (Paul's daughter and sweetheart among them), Jersey's most formidable mall cop will have to become a real cop to save the day.

Underworld 3: Rise of the Lycans

Friday		4:10	7:10	9:40
Saturday	1:15	4:10	7:10	9:40
Sunday	1:15	4:10	7:10	
Mon and Tues		4:10	7:10	

Michael Sheen, Bill Nighy
Thriller, Romance • Rated R

Hotel For Dogs

Friday		4:00	7:00	9:35
Saturday	1:00	4:00	7:00	9:35
Sunday	1:00	4:00	7:00	
Mon and Tues		4:00	7:00	

Emma Roberts, Don Cheadle
Comedy, Children • Rated PG

Bride Wars

Friday		4:15	7:30	9:30
Saturday	1:10	4:15	7:30	9:30
Sunday	1:10	4:15	7:30	
Mon and Tues		4:15	7:30	

Kate Hudson, Anne Hathaway
Romantic Comedy • Rated PG

Unborn

Friday		4:25	7:20	9:50
Saturday	1:30	4:25	7:20	9:50
Sunday	1:30	4:25	7:20	
Mon and Tues		4:25	7:20	

Gary Oldman, Odette Yustman
Thriller, Supernatural • Rated PG 13

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Child star, parents happy to be part of 'Slumdog'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The makers of "Slumdog Millionaire" have done more for the film's child stars than their parents ever could, the father of one young actress said.

Rafiq Qureshi, whose 7-year-old daughter, Rubina, appears in the film, said that the filmmakers enrolled his daughter in school and "are taking complete care of my child."

"Whatever a parent could have done, they have done much more than that," he said during an interview with AP Television in Mumbai, India on Wednesday.

The film, which has earned widespread accolades and 10 Academy Awards nominations, came under criticism this week after reports in British newspapers suggested the child actors weren't adequately compensated for their work.

The movie relies on young actors at different ages to tell the stories of its three main characters as they grow up in—and eventually leave—a Mumbai slum. Two of the youngest stars were literally plucked from India's slums to appear in the film.

AP

In this Jan. 20, 2009 file photo, the cast and crew of the Golden Globe-winning film Slumdog Millionaire, from left, Ashutosh Lobo, Ayush Khedekar, Anil Kapoor, Azharuddin Mohommed Ismail, director Danny Boyle and Rubina pose for photographs after a press conference in Mumbai, India, Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2009.

The youngest stars have had their schooling paid for until they turn 18 and funds have been established to cover their basic living costs, health care and emergencies, director Danny Boyle and producer Christian Colson said in a statement Wednesday. Each child will also receive "a substantial lump sum" when they complete their studies, the statement said.

"A plan has been in place for over 12 months to ensure that their experience working on 'Slumdog Millionaire' would be of long term benefit," distributor Fox Searchlight said in a separate statement. It said the children were paid three times the average local annual adult salary in exchange for 30 days of work.

Michelle Obama's brother working on a book

NEW YORK (AP)—Michelle Obama's brother is working on a book, part tribute to his family and part inspirational guide.

"I've been privileged to know some extraordinary people in my life," Craig Robinson, whose "A Game of Character" will be published next year by Gotham Books, said in a statement issued Thursday. "I've watched as my sister Michelle, a rock of a mother, became a leader in her own right. My brother-in law, President Barack Obama, who I knew from the first time I met him had something special, continues to inspire all of us."

Robinson, who coaches men's basketball at Oregon State University, introduced his sister last summer at the Democratic National Convention in Denver.

Gotham is an imprint of Penguin Group (USA).

Connick Jr. braves a big chill while filming movie

NEW YORK (AP)—According to Harry Connick Jr., winter in Canada counts as a fifth season. While filming the romantic comedy "New in Town" in Winnipeg last January, the actor's face, beard and eyelashes froze in the subzero temperature.

"This was just a different level. I mean, for real," Connick Jr. said Tuesday. "You can't function. ... I mean, this is the kind of weather where if you stay out there, you're not gonna make it, you know?"

Luckily, the 41-year-old actor had co-star Renee Zellweger's company to distract him from the cold. The Southern-born stars—he grew up in New Orleans, she hails from Texas—clicked instantly and their scenes together felt natural, he said.

"She's really smart, she's really, really funny and she just loves to have a good time," he said of the Oscar-winning actress. "And I think we have a lot in common, so we hit it off sort of off-camera before we even started working together. So that made a big difference. I mean, when you really like being around somebody, it's easy."

AP

In this image released by The Rachael Ray Show, host Rachael Ray, left, laughs as she and Renee Zellweger, center, listen to Harry Connick, Jr., during the production of "The Rachael Ray Show" in New York on Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2009.

"New in Town" features Connick Jr. as a blue-collar union rep and Zellweger as a corporate executive from Miami sent to New Ulm, Minn., to revamp a food-processing plant.

Connick Jr. and his character, a low-key single dad, have something in common: tween daughters dating for the first time. In the movie, he tries to scare off a boy who arrives at the door with the ill-conceived threat: "Whatever you do to her, I do to you."

But in real life, Connick Jr.—who has three girls with wife Jill Goodacre—sees no need to intimidate the boyfriend of his eldest daughter, Georgia, 12.

"I know he's a good kid and I know that his family's a good family, so that definitely helps," he said. "And he's got manners. He's very polite, very respectful. ... The last thing I want to do is embarrass my kid or embarrass the boy."

AP

In this Nov. 6, 2006, file photo, actor Heath Ledger arrives to the premiere of "Candy" in New York.

Heath Ledger insurance suit settles

LOS ANGELES (AP)—An agreement has been reached in a lawsuit involving Heath Ledger's $10 million life insurance policy.

The confidential settlement was revealed in court documents filed Wednesday in Los Angeles. Ledger's attorneys are seeking a closed hearing next month to establish a court guardian to represent the actor's 3-year-old daughter, Matilda Rose, who is the policy's beneficiary.

An attorney for Ledger sued ReliaStar Life Insurance Co. last year, claiming the company was refusing to pay the actor's death benefits. The attorney claimed the insurer was refusing to pay because it wanted to investigate whether Ledger's death was a suicide.

A coroner ruled Ledger's death last January was from an accidental prescription drug overdose.

William Shernoff, who represented Ledger's attorney, said Thursday that both sides were pleased with the settlement. He declined to discuss specifics of the deal.

'Idol': Judges misconstrued 'Be careful' remark

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Be careful not to read too much into what someone from Louisville says while heading out the door—like the "American Idol" judges did.

The producers of "Idol" apologized Thursday on behalf of its judges, who apparently misinterpreted what a contestant in Louisville, Ky., said after a failed audition. On his way out, Mark Mudd said: "Take care and be careful."

Paula Abdul and Simon Cowell took that as a threat. Abdul scolded Mudd, telling him, "You don't say that to people, 'Be careful.' That's just not a normal thing to say."

It turns out that "Be careful" is a regional parting expression.

The show's producers say they had not heard that from any other contestants, so it took everyone by surprise.

A statement from "Idol" producers said: "We now know better and look forward to visiting Louisville again someday."

Jennifer Hudson films new video

NEW YORK (AP)—Jennifer Hudson has finished filming her first video since the slayings of her mother, brother and nephew.

The clip for "If This Isn't Love" was done in Los Angeles and is set to debut the week of Feb. 9.

The 27-year-old singer/actress is slowly starting to return back to work following the October slayings of her 57-year-old mother, Darnell Hudson Donerson; 29-year-old brother Jason Hudson; and 7-year-old nephew Julian King. Her estranged brother-in-law has been charged in the killings.

She is scheduled to sing the national anthem at the Super Bowl on Sunday, and also at the Feb. 8 Grammy Awards, where she is nominated for four awards for her self-titled debut CD.

In this Oct. 6, 2008 file photo, Jennifer Hudson poses at the post-premiere party for "The Secret Life of Bees" at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Beverly Hills, Calif.

AP

Stuntman injured on set of Harry Potter movie

LONDON (AP)—British officials are investigating an accident on the set of the latest Harry Potter film that left a stunt man seriously injured.

Studio Warner Bros. says a man was hurt at Leavesden Studios near London, where "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows" is in preproduction.

The ambulance service says a man in his 20s suffered a significant back injury in the accident Wednesday. His name was not released but British media reported he was stunt double for Daniel Radcliffe, who plays the boy wizard in the hit films.

The Health and Safety Executive said Thursday it was investigating the workplace accident.

Stepmom tries too hard to be 'one of the girls'

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DearAbby

DEAR ABBY: My dad recently married someone much younger, so my sister and I have a new stepmom. "Tori" has no children of her own. She's nice, but she's trying too hard.

She constantly tries to make "girl talk" about personal things that girls our age talk about with sisters and friends, but not their parents. She also insists on doing things together during our visitations. She takes us clothes shopping and tries to tell us what we should wear.

Tori never knocks before coming into the room where we stay at Dad's, even when she knows we're getting dressed. She says, "We're all girls." She actually spends more time with us that our dad does, but there is such a thing as too much attention.

Tori is now planning an "all girls weekend" for the three of us. Because we'll be sharing one hotel room, there won't be a minute's peace from her. We don't want to hurt her feelings since she's trying so hard—unlike friends of ours who have the opposite problem with their stepmoms.

How can we discuss boundaries without hurting her feelings?

TOO CLOSE FOR COMFORT, SACRAMENTO, CALIF.

DEAR TOO CLOSE: You're right, your stepmother is trying too hard. Chalk it up to the fact that she's much younger than your father, is new to the role she's playing and is trying to relate to you as an equal.

What concerns me about your letter is the fact that you are spending more time with your father's wife than you are with him. That's not what visitation is for. My advice is to talk to your mother and father about this, privately. And please do it soon, so an intervention with Tori can be managed before she alienates those she's trying so hard to befriend.

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I am a 44-year-old single woman who considers herself fairly progressive. I have a rewarding career, great family, terrific friends and I date occasionally. One old-fashioned sticking point that is annoying me more and more: I'm sick to death of men I meet who say, "Call me on Saturday"—or whenever they want to be contacted. What I tell them is, "Call ME if you want to see me." Then they don't bother to call.

Female friends my age and older say it should be up to the man to call the woman. Younger ones say if I'm interested, I should call the guy. I figure if he doesn't call, he's not really interested.

I currently work at home and can appreciate a hectic schedule. When I'm traveling, things can be wild—so logically, I expect a man to call me if he's interested because the last thing I'd want to do is to interrupt him during his workday. Who is right?

STICKLER IN PALATINE, ILL.

DEAR STICKLER: Coming from a generation that was raised to believe that the man should always call the woman, it is not easy to take the initiative and make a call. However, the rules of dating have changed since you were taught those restrictions.

It's time you learned a few new tricks—and the people who can teach you are your younger friends. Let them give you a lesson or two and try some role-playing. I'm sure you'll have the technique down in no time.

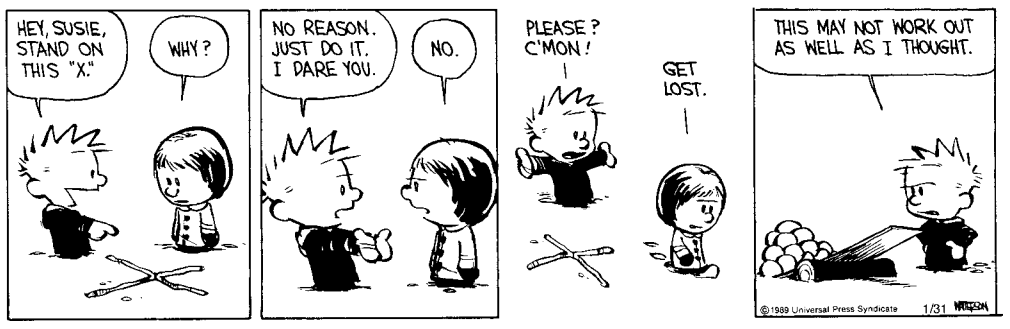
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

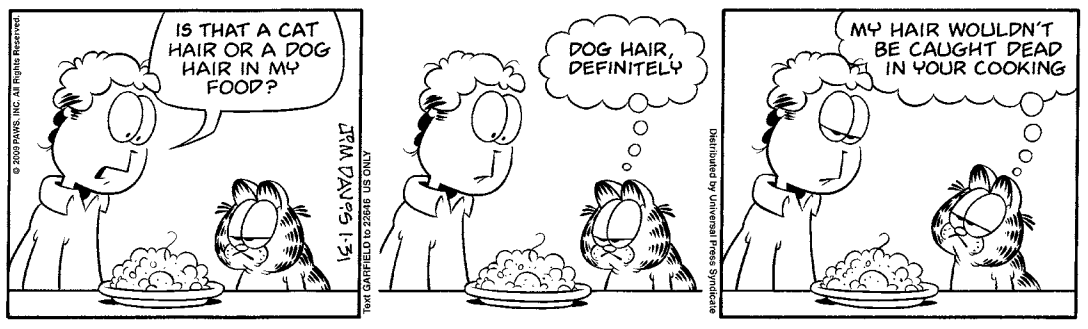
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis


IS THAT A CAT HAIR OR A DOG HAIR IN MY FOOD?
DOG HAIR, DEFINITELY
MY HAIR WOULDN'T BE CAUGHT DEAD IN YOUR COOKING
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JIM DAVIS 1-31
Text GARFIELD to 22646 US ONLY
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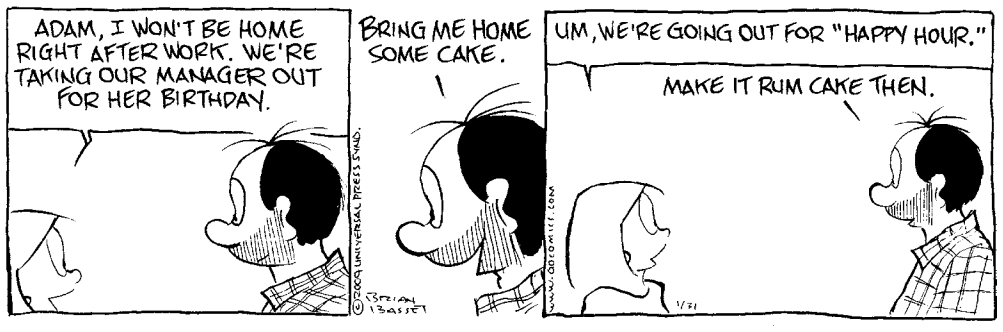
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


ADAM, I WON'T BE HOME RIGHT AFTER WORK. WE'RE TAKING OUR MANAGER OUT FOR HER BIRTHDAY.
BRING ME HOME SOME CAKE.
UM, WE'RE GOING OUT FOR "HAPPY HOUR."
MAKE IT RUM CAKE THEN.
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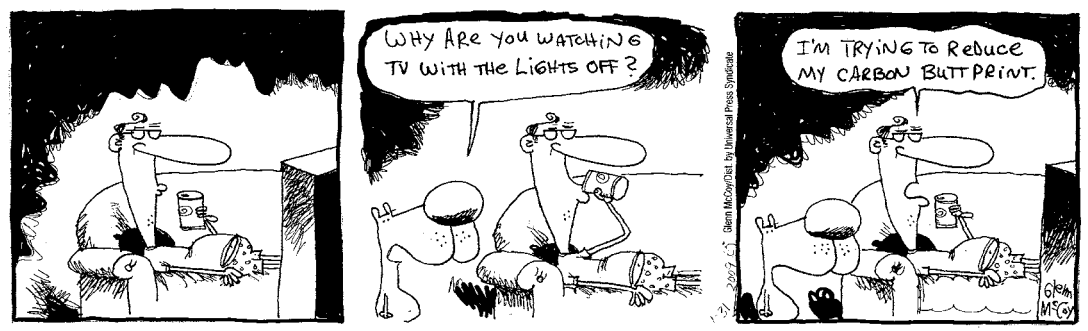
BRIAN BASSET
WWW.ADAMCOMICS.COM
1/31

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


WHY ARE YOU WATCHING TV WITH THE LIGHTS OFF?
I'M TRYING TO REDUCE MY CARBON BUTTPRINT.
Glenn McCoy/Dist. by Universal Press Syndicate
2007
GLENN McCOY

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

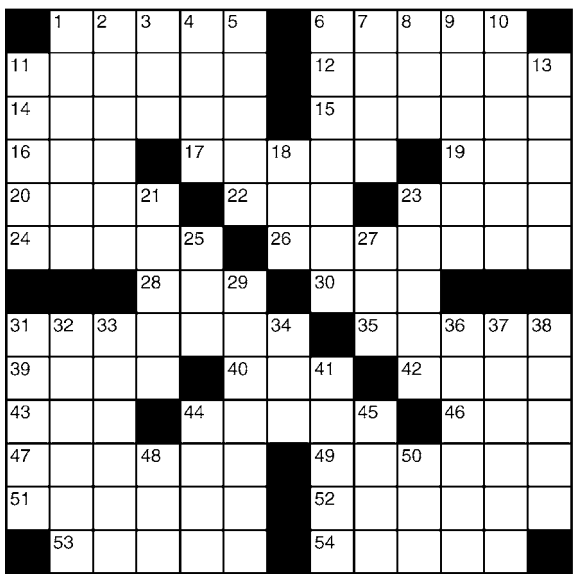
ACROSS
1 Feudal workers
6 Mosque VIPs
11 Unrestrained
12 Cancel
14 Less potent
15 Soccer shot
16 Allow
17 Kosher
19 Hr. fraction
20 Tied
22 Charlotte's creation
23 Hindu princess
24 Put back to zero
26 Freedom
28 Triumphed
30 File-folder feature
31 Slip
35 Noteworthy statements
39 Siblingless
40 Grecian vessel
42 Not this way?
43 Altar affirmative
44 Porch
46 Homer's neighbor Flanders
47 Guide
49 Library patron
51 Woman of La Mancha
52 Electron tube type
53 Transfer
54 Don't waste a moment

DOWN
1 Record holder?
2 Cheers up
3 Scepter
4 Gasohol, e.g.
5 Scatter about
6 Discourage psychologically
7 Bump into
8 — Khan
9 Maniac
10 Oktoberfest supply
11 Freud contemporary
13 Borgnine autobiography
18 Solidify
21 Informative
23 Make another offer
25 Youngster
27 Scoundrel
29 Achromatic
31 Drudges
32 Absolutely
33 Everett of "Citizen Kane"
34 Country club employee
36 Andean vulture
37 Academic
38 Previn or Kostelanetz
41 Homeward bound, for Santa
44 Antitoxins
45 Cuzco's country
48 Happy companion?
50 Televise

Solution time: 27 mins.

S	A	M	B	A	■	O	D	D	■	S	A	L
I	D	I	O	T	■	B	A	A	■	P	R	O
T	O	N	A	L	■	J	I	N	G	L	E	S
■	■	G	R	A	D	E	S	■	R	I	T	E
O	W	L	■	S	I	C	■	O	A	T	E	R
H	O	E	S	■	S	T	U	D	Y	■	■	■
M	O	S	A	I	C	■	N	E	E	S	O	N
■	■	■	R	O	O	S	T	■	D	I	N	O
A	R	G	O	N	■	I	I	I	■	N	E	W
T	H	E	N	■	B	E	L	O	N	G	■	■
T	I	N	G	L	E	S	■	W	A	L	E	S
A	N	I	■	Y	E	T	■	A	P	E	A	K
R	O	E	■	E	R	A	■	N	A	S	T	Y

Yesterday's answer 1-31



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Justin Timberlake, 28; Portia DeRossi, 36; Minnie Driver, 39; Nolan Ryan, 62

Happy Birthday: Your charm will help you get your way this year. Your vision is large scale but take baby steps if you want to complete what you start. Don't let uncertainty in a partnership be your downfall. Success will be due to your strength of character and refusal to give in to defeat. Your numbers are 6, 11, 16, 25, 29, 33, 46

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Say what's on your mind and you will get a quicker response from the people who are willing to help you regarding reform. There is no point wasting time with someone who has ulterior motives. Weigh the pros and cons and move on. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Your personal life is heading into a high cycle, bringing about a connection to someone who will complement you. Keep things simple: This is not the time to go overboard, especially for the wrong reasons. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Getting together with someone from your past will bring back memories but could create confusion with regard to where you are in life. The grass may look greener on the other side of the fence but, if you make a move too quickly, you are likely to have regrets. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Run a tight ship. Don't let someone get involved who doesn't fully understand what you are trying to accomplish. You are better off doing the bulk of the work on your own. Keep personal secrets and handle any business matters professionally. ✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Talk is cheap and will lead to the answers you are looking for, so don't hold back. By showing interest, someone will recognize your enthusiasm and an opportunity will be offered. Keep a tight rein on your finances. ✪✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Keep things simple. You don't have to engage in a big production in order to impress someone who is probably already looking up to you. Your motives must be right before you can make a commitment or accept a deal. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Looking back can provide insights into what you have and what the possibilities are. Hook up with someone from your past—this time the timing will be better and should benefit both of you. Be prepared to negotiate and compromise. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Uncertainty regarding someone from your past may cause problems in a current relationship you have. Be open about your motives if you want to avoid repercussions. You may be the one not seeing clearly. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Stop avoiding the unavoidable. Get busy making the adjustments required to improve your life. You can turn things around by getting rid of the people who are causing you grief. Someone more suitable is waiting for you. ✪✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Pull yourself together and refuse to let your emotions lead to a foolish mistake. Someone may be enticing but saying no will save you tremendous losses in the future. You can look back with relief if you make the right choice now. ✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Your sensitivity toward others will help you build strong connections to people who will be there for you when you need a hand. Make a promise and stick to it. A gesture made now can turn into a milestone in your life. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Keep your thoughts to yourself and avoid negative backlash. You will be uncertain about your emotions regarding a pending relationship and should probably take a break to think about how you feel and what you want. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are charming, outgoing and popular. You are hardheaded and determined and will do whatever it takes to make a difference.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		2						
	4		1		8		2	
		8		7		6		5
	3						7	
		7		2		1		
	8						9	
4		3		9		7		
	6		8		4		3	
						5		

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 1/31

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

1	9	6	2	7	8	5	3	4
3	2	8	6	4	5	1	9	7
7	4	5	9	3	1	2	6	8
5	3	2	8	9	7	4	1	6
8	1	7	5	6	4	3	2	9
4	6	9	3	1	2	7	8	5
9	5	3	7	2	6	8	4	1
6	8	1	4	5	3	9	7	2
2	7	4	1	8	9	6	5	3

Difficulty Level ★★★★ 1/30

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

SUPERBOWL 2009 TAMPA **Solution: 8 letters**

L	S	C	P	S	C	O	M	M	I	T	T	E	E	P
R	E	H	S	R	E	S	O	L	V	R	R	M	F	L
T	E	A	M	S	S	C	O	E	M	O	O	I	I	A
N	R	M	G	S	I	B	N	N	E	P	P	T	N	Y
G	O	P	R	U	T	U	L	E	D	H	P	F	A	O
I	O	I	R	O	E	A	T	E	I	Y	U	L	L	F
A	D	O	T	E	F	X	D	S	A	D	S	A	I	F
N	T	N	S	I	P	R	C	I	A	C	U	H	S	S
T	U	H	S	T	D	A	E	I	U	C	H	A	T	G
S	O	S	U	O	N	A	R	P	T	M	E	E	S	U
W	I	N	N	E	R	E	R	A	H	E	K	L	R	E
Ⓢ	N	E	D	D	A	M	V	T	T	C	M	C	E	S
H	Ⓔ	T	A	L	E	N	T	E	I	I	T	E	O	T
I	R	Ⓐ	Y	S	G	N	I	T	A	R	O	A	N	S
P	A	T	Ⓣ	E	N	D	A	N	C	E	S	N	M	T

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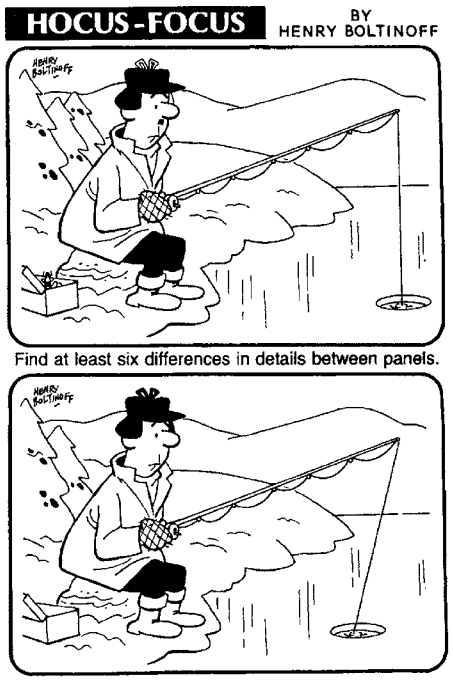
Attendance, Audience, Bleachers, Champion, Committee, Event, Excitement, Finalists, Giants, Grass, Guests, Halftime, League, Loser, Madden, Match, Media, Outdoor, Performer, Playoffs, Preparation, Ratings, Seat, Ship, Show, Site, Sock, Stadium, Sunday, Support, Talent, Teams, Telecast, Tickets, Tradition, Trophy, Venue, Winner

Yesterday's Answer: Digital

We listened to your requests! TREASURY #6 is the first-ever Wonderword book containing only 20 x 20 puzzles, with 75 of these large puzzles. To order, send check or money order for $10.95 each plus $3.25 p&h ($14.20 total each, U.S. funds only) for the first volume, $1.50 p&h for each additional volume, to Wonderword, Universal Press Syndicate, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo. 64106 or call toll-free 1-800-642-6480. Order online at upuzzles.com.

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.

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Differences: 1. Hat is all black. 2. Mustache is missing. 3. Fishing hole is moved. 4. Tackle is gone from box. 5. Boots are higher. 6. Tree is missing.

Wishing Well®

8	3	5	6	2	4	2	4	3	7	3	8	4
A	G	B	B	R	F	E	I	O	V	A	W	N
2	5	7	4	8	7	5	2	3	4	6	2	6
L	E	I	I	O	T	C	I	L	S	L	S	U
3	4	3	7	4	3	6	3	2	7	2	7	5
S	H	N	A	P	O	E	T	H	L	Y	I	H
7	3	2	3	2	8	7	2	4	8	3	7	2
T	A	O	L	U	R	Y	R	R	T	T	I	S
7	5	7	6	8	2	6	3	7	5	7	4	3
S	A	Y	S	H	U	K	E	O	R	U	O	R
2	4	7	6	3	2	4	8	3	4	5	2	8
C	J	R	I	E	C	E	Y	D	C	M	E	G
4	5	8	5	2	4	6	2	8	7	8	6	5
T	I	I	N	S	S	E	S	F	S	T	S	G

HERE IS A PLEASANT LITTLE GAME that will give you a message every day. It's a numerical puzzle designed to spell out your fortune. Count the letters in your first name. If the number of letters is 6 or more, subtract 4. If the number is less than 6, add 3. The result is your key number. Start at the upper left-hand corner and check one of your key numbers, left to right. Then read the message the letters under the checked figures give you.

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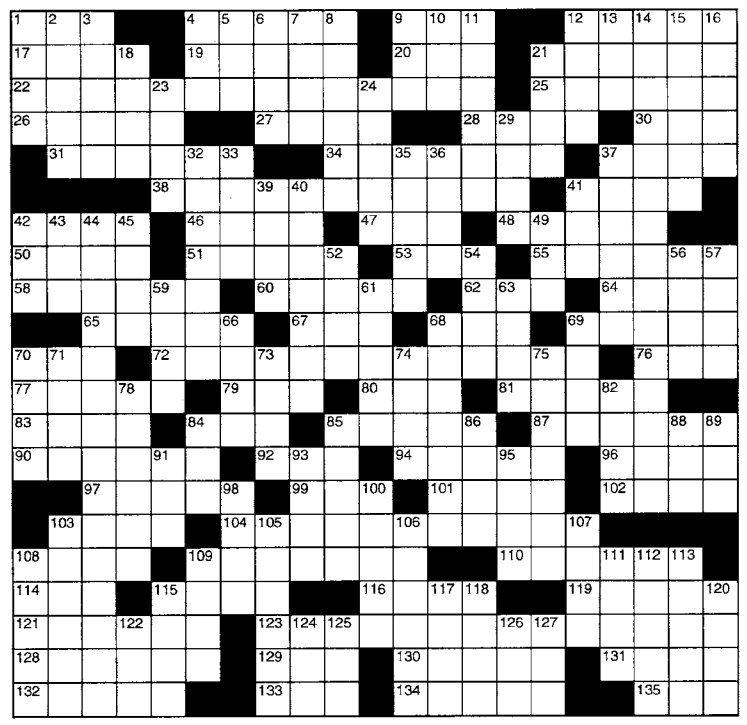
Super Crossword

SHARPEN YOUR WITS

ACROSS
1 Mineral suffix
4 Awaited
9 Two, in Tijuana
12 Out of line
17 Worthless
19 Pad
20 Journalist Tarbell
21 Hapsburg capital
22 Like a spy story
25 Actress Jennifer
26 Former Pentagon head
27 Big name in locks
28 Dweeb's cousin?
30 Competitor
31 Germ type
34 Made likely
37 Pumper's pride
38 Harrison Ford movie
41 With 68 down, "CHiPs" star
42 Tenor Thomas
46 Writer Hunter
47 Turf
48 Field marshal Rommel
50 Chemistry info
51 Gets slushy
53 Seoul soldier
55 Non-threatening
58 Ms. Goldberg
60 Act like Etna
62 Fine stuff?
64 Actor Everett
65 Bring up
67 Conger
68 Look over
69 "Superman" star
70 Pitch in
72 Somerset Maugham work
76 Pale
77 Gravy ingredient
79 Prison pariah
80 Rum sum
81 Mead's milieu
83 Eatery
84 Snyder or Hanks
85 Houston ballplayer
87 Detest
90 "Calendar Girl" crooner
92 Fox's foot
94 Desert schlepper
96 Circus barker?
97 Fight site
99 Crank's comment
101 Take risks
102 Auto adornment
103 Very, very satisfied
104 Michael Ansara series
108 Egg plant?
109 Fondue ingredient
110 Rifleman
114 Business abbr.
115 James of "Misery"
116 Pearl Harbor's locale
119 Hold back
121 Flautist James
123 The Searchers hit
128 Private's posture
129 Lodge member
130 Carry on
131 Joy Adamson's joy
132 Hirsute Jamaican
133 Occupy a cot
134 Chutzpah
135 Chariot bumper?

DOWN
1 Peruvian of old
2 Oklahoma city
3 Hitch in haste
4 Quote from 41 down
5 — Saud
6 Comic Goodman
7 Snorri's stories
8 He moves cars
9 Excavate
10 Laudatory lyrics
11 French philosopher
12 Isn't completely wrong?
13 Diocese
14 Roman Polanski film
15 Put behind bars
16 Cardiff's country
18 Where lions laze
21 Nothing but space
23 Handle
24 Class
29 Used to be
32 Imperfection
33 Roof edge
35 Breathe like a bull
36 Reverse
37 Eventual monarch
39 Chip's chum
40 Beseech
41 Fluffy female
42 Mouth piece?
43 Antique ending
44 Impending peril
45 Pericles' portico
49 Mil. group
52 De Lesseps' ditch
54 Danny or Stubby
56 Hot rocks?
57 Early orchard?
59 Essence
61 Machinations
63 Some wines
66 Mr. Saarinen
68 See 41 Across
69 San —, Italy
70 Basics
71 "Dies —"
73 Interstate exit
74 Coll. cadets
75 Armada member
78 Shred
82 Kind of kiln
84 Prepare to be in "Baywatch"
85 Vigilant
86 Astronomer Khayyam
88 "Bali —"
89 New Haven hardwood
91 Brew barrel
93 "— Named Sue" ('69 hit)
95 Slips up
98 "— -Ca-Dabra" ('74 song)
100 Biblical tyrant
103 Musical composition
105 Stream
106 Kevin of "SNL"
107 Unrestrained
108 Churchill trademark
109 Motown's Marvin
111 Organ part
112 Boxer Griffith
113 Hair coloring
115 — Grande, AZ
117 Present
118 Weekend warriors (Abbr.)
120 Autocrat
122 Angkor — (Cambodian temple)
124 Ivy Leaguer
125 Manage, with "out"
126 Off-rd. transport
127 Formerly known as



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Trivia test

by Fifi Rodriguez

1. LANGUAGE: What does the French phrase "entre nous" mean?
2. TELEVISION: What kind of "dinosaur" was the Flintstones' family pet Dino?
3. AD SLOGANS: What product used the advertising slogan, "How do you spell relief?"
4. MYTHOLOGY: Who was the Greek goddess of the hearth and home?
5. GEOGRAPHY: In which city would you find the famous Trevi Fountain?
6. MUSIC: Which recording artist had a 1970s hit with the song "Crocodile Rock"?
7. LITERATURE: What was Dorothy Parker's pseudonym?
8. RELIGION: Who is the patron saint of artists?
9. CHEMISTRY: What is the Periodic Table symbol for silver?
10. COMICS: What is the name of the military base where Beetle Bailey and his friends reside?

Answers

1. Privately, between us
2. Snorkasaurus
3. R-O-L-A-I-D-S
4. Hestia
5. Rome
6. Elton John
7. Constant Reader
8. St. Luke
9. Ag
10. Camp Swampy

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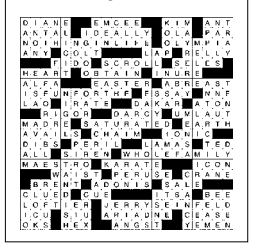
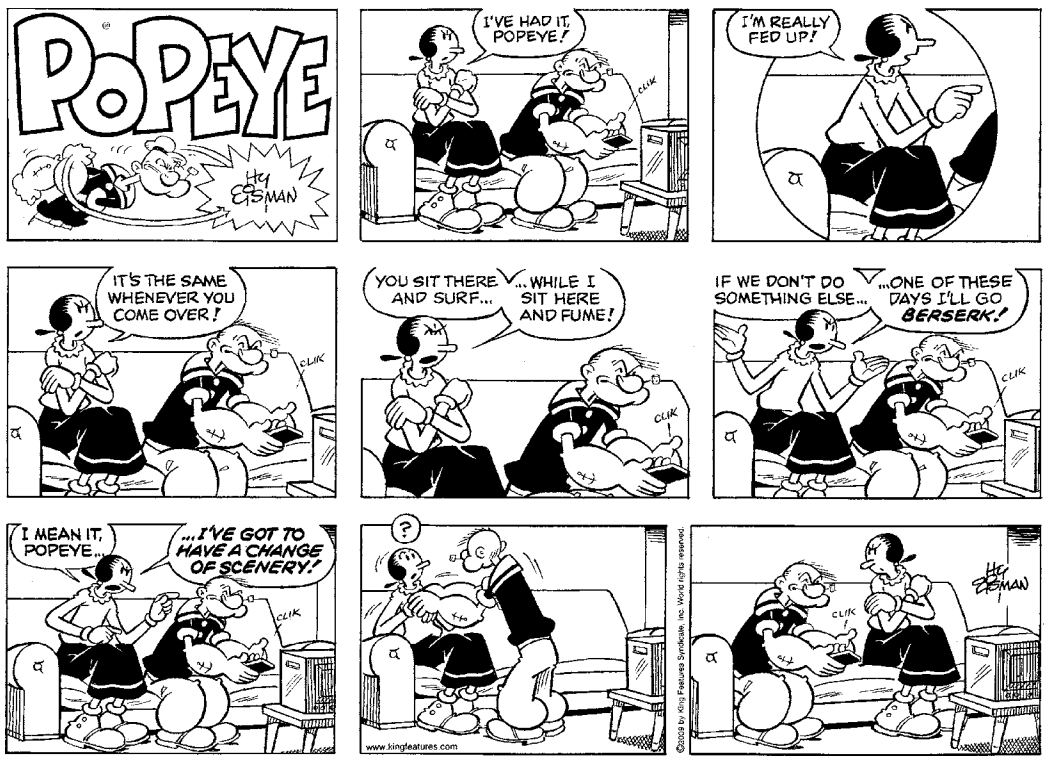
Saturday's Answers




POPEYE
HEY OLIVE OYL
I'VE HAD IT, POPEYE!
CLIK
I'M REALLY FED UP!
IT'S THE SAME WHENEVER YOU COME OVER!
YOU SIT THERE AND SURF...
...WHILE I SIT HERE AND FUME!
IF WE DON'T DO SOMETHING ELSE...
...ONE OF THESE DAYS I'LL GO BERSERK!
I MEAN IT, POPEYE...
...I'VE GOT TO HAVE A CHANGE OF SCENERY!
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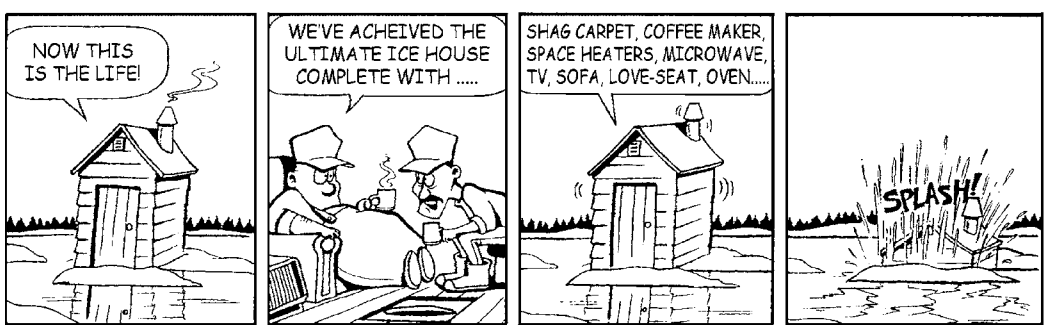
Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps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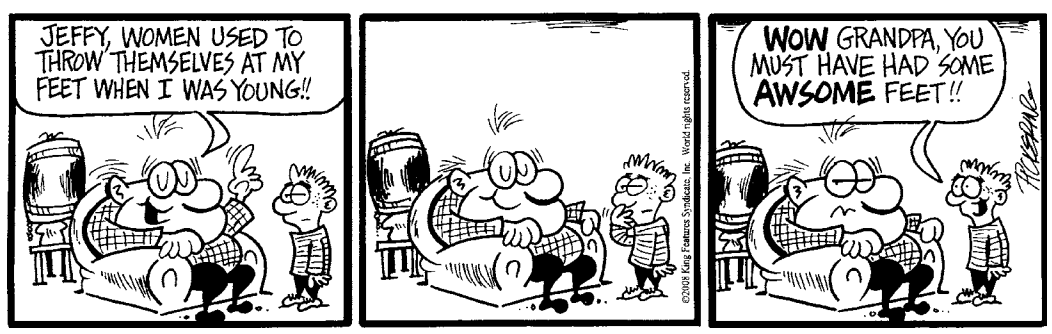
by Jeff Pickering


JEFFY, WOMEN USED TO THROW THEMSELVES AT MY FEET WHEN I WAS YOUNG!!
WOW GRANDPA, YOU MUST HAVE HAD SOME AWSOME FEET!!
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MARK TRAIL
BOATERS WHO DUMP LITTER OVERBOARD ARE CREATING HAZARDS FOR MARINE CREATURES AND BIRDS
ANIMALS CAN BECOME ENTANGLED IN PLASTIC GARBAGE
IN SPITE OF ITS EXTREMELY POTENT STINGERS, THE PORTUGUESE MAN-OF-WAR IS RELISHED BY SEA TURTLES...
WHICH SEEK OUT AND FEED ON THE TRANSPARENT BUBBLE FLOATS OF THESE DRIFTING DENIZENS OF THE SEA
THOUGHTLESS BOATERS THROWING TRASH OVERBOARD OFTEN DISCARD PLASTIC BAGS...
MAY ATTEMPT TO SWALLOW THEM, WITH DISASTROUS RESULTS
AND THE BIG REPTILES, MISTAKING THE CLEAR BAGS BUOYED BY THE TRAPPED AIR FOR THE MAN-OF-WAR...
JACK ELROD
REFUSE SHOULD BE TAKEN BACK TO SHORE AND DISPOSED OF PROPERLY
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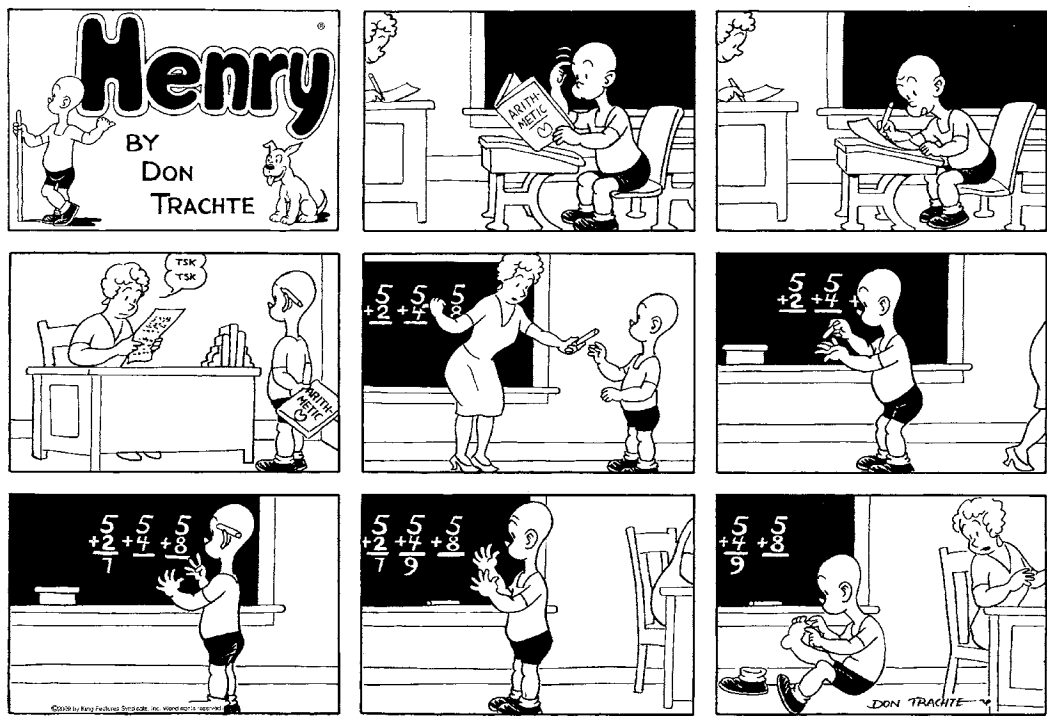

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Ana C. Castro
P.O. Box 501331
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone No. 234-1331

PRO SE

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN RE THE MATTER OF THE PETITION TO APPOINT GENERAL GUARDIANSHIP FOR: **TORANNA MARIE REYES CASTRO FRED CAMACHO CASTRO II and TORCUATO REYES CASTRO** Minor Children by CARLA DAEL CAMACHO CASTRO Petitioner.	FCD AD CIVIL ACTION NO. 09-0035 NOTICE OF HEARING

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for Appointment of Guardianship for the above-named minor children by Carla Dael Camacho Castro Petitioner, was filed with the above-entitled Honorable Court and is open for review at the office of the Clerk of the said Court in Susupe, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A HEARING of said petition for Guardianship will held at the above-entitled Honorable Court at Guma Hustisia Building, Susupe, Saipan, NMI, before Honorable Kenneth Govendo on the 9th day of February, 2009 at 1:30 p.m. or soon as thereafter.

Bernadita A. Sablan
Clerk of Court

/s/ By: Deputy Clerk of Court

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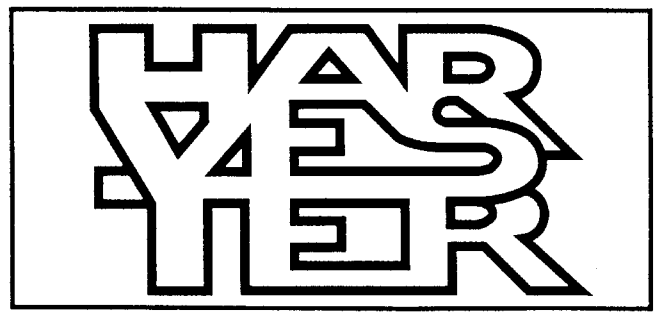

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Federer beats Roddick to reach final

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—Roger Federer moved within one victory of his 14th Grand Slam title with another dominating victory, ousting Andy Roddick 6-2, 7-5, 7-5 Thursday to reach the Australian Open final.

Roddick, whose rigorous offseason training regime was designed to help him beat Federer and top-ranked Rafael Nadal, was in good form.

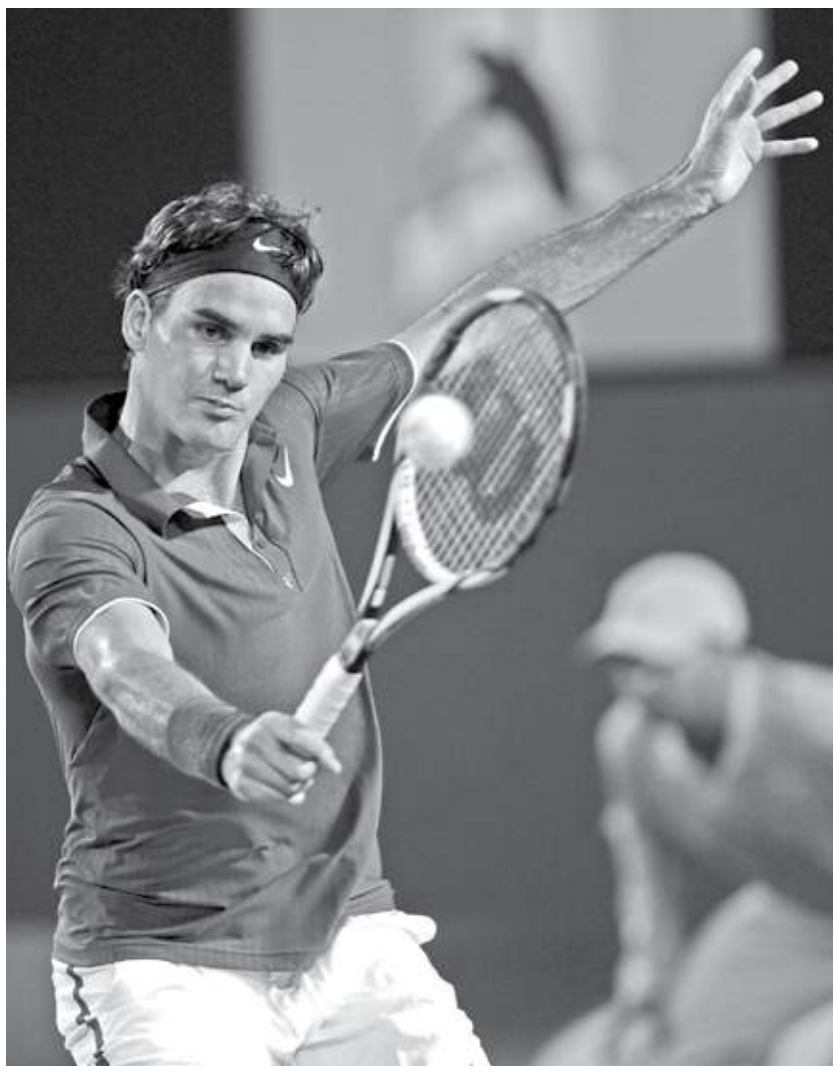
But second-ranked Federer outplayed him in every phase of the game. Ripping winners from all over the court and usually forcing Roddick to hit more than one good shot to win a point, he even had more aces than the hard-serving American, 16-8.

"I served well in the first set and that gave me a lot of confidence," Federer said. "I was moving well and getting a lot of balls back and making it difficult for Andy to get the upper hand from the baseline. That was kind of what I was hoping for."

Federer, seeking his fourth Australian title, will face the winner of Friday's semifinal between Nadal and fellow Spanish left-hander Fernando Verdasco.

"I don't have to wait to see who wins, I can start preparing for a leftie tonight," Federer said.

The women's final matchup was set earlier in the day. Serena Williams was calm, collected and cool with the Rod Laver Arena roof closed to keep out what news reports called Melbourne's hottest January day since 1939—temperatures hit 44C (111F). She ended Olympic champion Elena Dementieva's 15-match winning streak with a 6-3, 6-4 victory.



AP

Switzerland's Roger Federer makes a return to Andy Roddick of the United States on his way to winning their Men's singles semifinal match at the Australian Open Tennis Championship in Melbourne, Australia, Thursday, Jan. 29, 2009.

All that stands between her and a 10th Grand Slam title is third-seeded Dinara Safina, who is hungry to take home her first major trophy to go along with the two that brother Marat Safin has earned.

Safina ousted fellow Russian Vera Zvonareva 6-3, 7-6 (4) in the other semifinal. The winner Saturday also will rise to the No. 1 ranking.

By the time Federer and Roddick were on court in the evening, temperatures had dropped to 33C (91F) so the retractable roof was open.

Although Roddick won their last meeting, Federer raised his record against him to 16-2.

"The last time I lost, so coming into this match there was a bit of pressure," Federer said.

It didn't show. Instead, this one played out like many of the Swiss star's previous victories.

Blunting Roddick's blistering serves, Federer broke twice in the first set. Adding to Roddick's frustration was a call that went against him as Federer served at 4-1.

A Federer shot was called out, but he successfully challenged. Chair umpire Enric Molina ruled that Roddick couldn't have gotten to the ball and gave the point to Federer. Roddick argued he stopped running when he heard the "out" call, and he had an ongoing dialogue with Molina during several changeovers.

With both players holding easily in the second set, a tiebreaker loomed with Roddick serving at 5-5. Federer broke at love, then easily held with Roddick failing to get a serve return back in play. That was pretty much the match.

"Let's not kid ourselves," Roddick said. "You're down two sets to him and scraping, trying to survive. I hit the ball pretty well. He just came up with shots when he needed to. That's what he does."

Roddick had 38 winners, only 18 unforced errors and two double faults.

After serving a double-fault at 2-2 in the third set, Roddick got a warning for an audible obscenity and told Molina: "I take back the apology."

Roddick served again at 5-5 in the third set, and Federer—who seems to come up with his best tennis under pressure—broke again. He easily held, finishing off the match with a forehand down the line—his 51st winner to just 15 unforced errors and has been playing better with each match.

"Towards the end of the tournament, I think this is where you should judge a great player," Federer said.

Nitties, Glover lead 1st round of FBR Open

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP)—In his PGA Tour bio, James Nitties lists his special interests as "clubbing, girls, movies."

He's come to the right place.

Nitties shot a 6-under 65 on Thursday for a share of the first-round lead with Lucas Glover in the FBR Open at TPC Scottsdale, renowned as the most partying stop on the PGA Tour.

The opening round was no party for local favorite Phil Mickelson, tied for 121st after shooting a 5-over 76 in his first round of the year.

Play was called due to darkness with nine players still on the course.

While Mickelson searched for answers, Nitties was reveling in the FBR Open's anything-goes atmosphere.

"This is one of the events I was looking forward to the most," said Nitties, a 26-year-old Australian. "If you knew me, it's tough for me to concentrate out here. But on the flip side, I'm on the PGA Tour and I'm not going to take it for granted, so I know when to put my partying on hold, and I know when to put in hard work. Yeah, there's some good sights out there."

On Thursday, there were also some bad sights—such as Mickelson digging his drives out of cacti on the 11th and 13th holes.

Mickelson finished with as many double bogeys (2) as birdies, and he also had three bogeys. Only six players posted higher scores on a breezy, sunny day.

Mickelson usually fares well at TPC Scottsdale, winning in 1996 and 2005 and losing in a playoff last year. This was his season debut, but the former Arizona State star said he wasn't rusty and thought his swing was in good shape.

"It doesn't feel as far off as the score indicates," Mickelson said. "I know the score is ridiculous. But it doesn't feel bad."

The highlight of Mickelson's day may have been a brief meeting with former President George H.W. Bush as Mickelson's group approached the 15th green. Bush also shook hands with Mickelson's partners, Justin Leonard and Zach Johnson.

Bush was part of a crowd of 71,907, which fell more than 11,000 short of last year's opening-round record. The FBR Open is the tour's most heavily attended event, but attendance has been down each of the first four days in what might be a sign of the flagging economy.

David Berganio Jr. and Charley Hoffman were tied for third, one stroke off the lead, with Briny Baird, Kevin Na and Matt Kuchar two strokes off the pace.

TPC Scottsdale has a long history of low scores; two years ago, John Rollins shot 20 under and lost by a stroke to Aaron Baddeley.

But players had heard that the course would be tougher this year, and the opening round bore that out.

Asked about a rumor that the fairways had tightened, Baird replied, "I don't think that's a rumor. That's a fact. They've pinched fairways in.

"The rough is definitely up from years past, so they're trying to toughen it up," Baird said. "If that's what they wanted, then success."

The tougher course didn't pose many problems for Nitties, who started fast and kept rolling. Despite hitting only seven of 14 fairways, Nitties posted five birdies in a six-hole stretch on the front nine and finished his round with back-to-back birdies.

"I really didn't get into too much trouble all day, and if I did, I'd sort of make the smart decision and it sort of worked together well," Nitties said.

Nitties is such an unknown that the official pairings sheet had him listed as "Nittles."

Nitties contended for a spot on the PGA Tour two years ago, but his arthritis flared up, and he spent nearly a month in a Texas hospital with pain in his right hip and knee. He was diagnosed with reactive arthritis, a chronic condition where fluid builds up in the joints.

Nitties bounced back last year and finished second at Q-school in December.

Nitties came to town with a bit of momentum, having shot a 10-under 62 at the Bob Hope Classic—where he still missed the cut by a stroke.

"Drawing on that, it was good, positive striking and golf to bring me into this week," he said.

This is the fifth time Glover has had at least a share of the first-round lead. He failed to win each of the first four times.

Glover, who is four years removed from his lone PGA Tour victory, closed with a rush, birdieing four of the last six holes. He had only one bogey, on the par-4 17th.

"It was pretty solid," Glover said. "I hit a lot of fairways, a lot of first cuts, actually, and only had a couple in the high stuff. I made a couple nice birdie putts and then made a couple key par putts and played the par 5s good. That usually equals a pretty good score, so I was pretty pleased, obviously."

Report: Bobby Estalella to testify against Barry Bonds

BRISTOL,Conn. (AP)—Former major league catcher Bobby Estalella has been subpoenaed by federal prosecutors to testify at Barry Bonds' trial, ESPN.com reported Thursday.

Estalella, who was on the San Francisco Giants with Bonds in 2000 and 2001, is expected to testify to firsthand knowledge that Bonds used steroids, the Web site said, citing an unidentified source with knowledge of the evidence. The Web site attributed knowledge of the subpoenas to two unidentified sources.

Estalella testified before a federal grand jury in November 2003. He admitted to the grand jury that he used performance-enhancing drugs, the San Francisco Chronicle reported in December 2004.

The book "Game of Shadows," by two Chronicle reporters, says Estalella received a drug schedule from Greg Anderson, Bonds' trainer, advising him to use human growth hormone, the steroids "the cream" and "the clear," and the female fertility drug Clomid.

Prosecutors also plan to call Jason Giambi and his brother, Jeremy, as witnesses at Bonds' trial so they can testify that Anderson gave them performance-enhancing drugs, The New York Times reported on its Web site Thursday night.

The newspaper said prosecutors want to use testimony from the Giambis, teammates in Oakland from 2000-01, to show that Anderson developed doping calendars for them. Then the prosecutors could argue that Anderson made similar calendars for Bonds, the Times said, citing an unidentified person briefed on the government's evidence. The newspaper said the person spoke on condition of anonymity because he didn't want to jeopardize his access to sensitive information.

After seven years with the New York Yankees, Jason Giambi re-signed with the Oakland Athletics this offseason. Jeremy Giambi has been out of the majors since 2003.

The Mitchell Report on drugs in baseball, released in December 2007, says that when the Los Angeles Dodgers considered signing Estalella as a free agent after the 2003 season, one team official noted in an internal conversation that Estalella was a "poster boy for the chemicals."

Bonds pleaded not guilty to charges of lying and obstruction of justice in connection with his grand jury testimony in December 2003. Bonds, who in his testimony denied using performance-enhancing drugs, is scheduled for trial starting March 2 in U.S. District Court in San Francisco.

Twenty federal agents raided the home of Anderson's mother-in-law on Wednesday.

Madeleine Gestas and her daughter Nicole Anderson, the trainer's wife, are the target of a tax investigation that Anderson's lawyer said is aimed at pressuring the trainer to testify at Bonds' trial.

Anderson's lawyer, Mark Geragos, believes the raid was in response to his refusal to tell prosecutors whether Anderson would testify. Anderson served more than a year in prison for refusing to testify to the grand jury.

Magic knock off Cavaliers, 99-88

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—The Orlando Magic are looking more and more like a contender in the Eastern Conference.

Dwight Howard had 22 points and 18 rebounds, Hedo Turkoglu added 19 points and 11 rebounds, and the Magic took advantage of LeBron James' shooting struggles to beat the Cleveland Cavaliers 99-88 on Thursday night.

The Magic spent the first half of the season playing in the shadow of defending NBA champion Boston and the Cavaliers. A 10-point home loss to the Celtics last week might have prompted some to consider Orlando an afterthought in the East.

If so, it was probably premature, even if the Magic would prefer to stay out of the limelight.

"I hope we're still under the radar," said guard Jameer Nelson, who added 18 points after being added to Eastern Conference All-Star earlier in the day. "Right now, it doesn't make a difference what people say about us a team and as individuals. We just want to reach our goals at the end of the season."

Orlando's goal Thursday night was to keep James from getting easy baskets, trying to get hands in his face on every shot while avoiding fouls that would send him to the free throw line.

James was 10-of-27 from the field, spending much of the night complaining to the officials. He finished with 23 points, eight rebounds and eight assists. But he took only six free throws—and missed three of them.

"I'm just trying to be quiet and not say anything to the refs," James said. "But it can get frustrating at times when you continue to just get beat up and you don't get the attention of the refs. I just try to be quiet and hopefully they'll call it the next time.

"But it can get frustrating because it can turn the momentum of the game and it can definitely hurt us."

Cleveland coach Mike Brown and guard Mo Williams picked up technical fouls in the third quarter while complaining to the officials about a lack of calls. Brown even had to be restrained by an assistant while screaming at one of the referees.

"The NBA is going to make calls how they see it," Brown said. "This was a physical game, and for a guy like that to go to the free throw line six times when he drove as much as he did, it's sad to see."

While the Cavs were complaining about a lack of free throws, Orlando pulled away in transition and from the 3-point line. The Magic overcame a 10-point deficit in the second quarter and turned a close game into a one-sided affair with a spree of jumpers in the fourth.

Mickael Pietrus started the spurt with a mid-range shot. Anthony Johnson and Rashard Lewis followed with consecutive 3-pointers. Lewis, who finished with 19 points, added a jumper, then Turkoglu and Nelson hit two more from behind the arc to make it a rout with 6 minutes remaining.

Turkoglu's breakaway dunk made it 97-74 and sent many fans scattering for the exits.

Orlando finished 11-of-31 from 3-point range—most of them open shots because Cleveland double- and triple-teamed Howard down low.

"We didn't play our the way we needed to against Boston," Howard said. "In order for us to win, we have to plat our game. We fall into playing the other team's game, we tend to lose. We played our game tonight. We ran, played inside-out, shot the ball with confidence, and that's what we have to do when we play against a good team."

The Magic gained momentum heading into halftime when they sliced a 10-point lead down to one, 56-55. They carried it out of the break, too.

Orlando scored the first seven points of the third quarter—two inside baskets by Howard and Lewis' 3-pointer.

Cleveland looked as if it would get back in it, but James couldn't get on track. His teammates didn't pick up the slack, either.

Williams, trying to prove he belonged in the All-Star game over Nelson, was 4-of-15 shooting and finished with 12 points. Wally Szczerbiak scored 14 points in his first 7 minutes on the floor, but he didn't get another bucket the rest of the way.

"We missed a lot of easy shots," James said. "Me personally, I missed a lot of easy shots. Some teams, if you miss shots and don't make them shots with them, they can get off to a big lead. They were able to break the lead open in the third quarter. ... The momentum shifted."

AP

Orlando Magic center Dwight Howard (12) takes a shot over Cleveland Cavaliers guard Sasha Pavlovic, left, of Serbia, and forward Ben Wallace (4) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Orlando, Fla., Thursday, Jan. 29, 2009.

Spurs 114, Suns 104

A Phoenix, Manu Ginobili made 18 free throws without a miss and finished with 30 points and nine rebounds, and Tony Parker added 26 points in the San Antonio Spurs' victory over the Phoenix Suns.

The victory was the Spurs' 29th in a row when they score 100 or more points—14 last season and 15 this season.

The game was close through three quarters, before a 9-2 run early in the fourth period gave the Spurs a 12-point lead. The Suns cut it to 107-104 with 1:05 remaining, but Parker's field goal and Ginobili's five free throws closed out the scoring.

Tim Duncan added 20 points and 15 rebounds, and Roger Mason, whose 3-point buzzer-beater gave San Antonio a one-point victory over Phoenix on Christmas, had 12 points.

Amare Stoudemire led the Suns with 28 points and 10 rebounds. Grant Hill had 20 points and 10 rebounds, Steve Nash finished with 16 points and 18 assists, and Shaquille O'Neal and Matt Barnes each scored 13 points. It was the first time in 20 games that O'Neal failed to score at least 15 points.

The first half, which ended 57-57, was filled with notable milestones, heated play. unusually high scoring when these teams meet and immaculate ballhandling.

During the half, Nash had nine assists, passing Suns coach Terry Porter for 11th place on the NBA's career list. Nash's seventh assist gave him 7,161, one more than Porter. O'Neal, who had eight points in the half, moved into seventh place on the scoring list, passing Hakeem Olajuwon. O'Neal sixth point him O'Neal 26,947, one ahead of Olajuwon.

Shaq back in All-Star game

NEW YORK (AP)—Shaq is back in the All-Star game.

After being left out of the NBA's midseason gala for first time in his career last season, Shaquille O'Neal received his 15th All-Star selection Thursday night when the reserves were announced for the Feb. 15 game in Phoenix.

"It feels good. It's not bad for somebody who can't shoot," said O'Neal, a career 52.7 percent free-throw shooter who is making more than 62 percent from the line this season.

O'Neal and Suns teammate Amare Stoudemire give the host team two Western Conference All-Stars.

"It helps to have the best power forward (Stoudemire), the best point guard (Steve Nash) and guys like (Grant) Hill playing with me. They've been looking out for me all season. They've been taking care of me. I've been trying to produce," O'Neal said before the Suns hosted San Antonio.

New Orleans, San Antonio and the Los Angeles Lakers also had multiple players on the West roster, which will be coached by the Lakers' Phil Jackson.

The Orlando Magic made out best in the East, with Jameer Nelson and Rashard Lewis picked as reserves by the conference's coaches alongside starter Dwight Howard. It's the first time Orlando has had three All-Stars.

"I was just anxious to find out," Nelson said. "I honestly don't get that way. But me hearing everywhere, 'You're an All-Star, you should be an All-Star, you're having an All-Star year.' So you just want to see if people will give you the respect that other people think you deserve."

But for the second year in a row, only two of the Boston Celtics' Big Three made the initial roster: Paul Pierce was voted in with starter Kevin Garnett, while Ray Allen was left out.

Traded to the Suns at last season's deadline, O'Neal endured the worst season of his career and had his record-tying streak of 14 consecutive All-Star appearances end. Now he's back in the showcase game, and trails only Kareem Abdul-Jabbar with 19 for most appearances.

Abdul-Jabbar, a Lakers assistant, will help coach the West team.

The 36-year-old O'Neal was averaging 18.2 points and 9.1 rebounds entering Thursday night's showdown against the Spurs. He needed five more points to catch Hakeem Olajuwon for seventh on the NBA's career scoring list.

O'Neal isn't the only veteran on a West roster flush with experience. The Spurs' Tim Duncan and the Lakers' Kobe Bryant are each making their 11th appearances, while Dallas forward Dirk Nowitzki was picked for the eighth time and Houston center Yao Ming for the seventh time.

Carmelo Anthony, who's missed the last 10 games with a broken bone in his right hand, was left off the roster even though he's been cleared to play Friday night at Charlotte. That leaves point guard Chauncey Billups the lone selection from the division-leading Nuggets.

"I was definitely excited. My next question right directly after that was, 'Did Melo make it?' Of course I'm disappointed in that," Billups said. "The only reason why is because of the injury. It's just an unfortunate situation."

Acquired in a trade with the Pistons on Nov. 3, Billups has given Denver a steady backcourt presence. The four-time All-Star is averaging 19.0 points and 6.5 assists.

If the West team plans to rely on experience, the East might turn to youthful exuberance.

Making their first All-Star teams are Nelson, New Jersey guard Devin Harris and Indiana forward Danny Granger, who was snubbed last season but whose play for the injury-depleted Pacers has been extraordinary.

Granger is fourth in the league in scoring at 25.8 points per game.

"He's really dedicated himself as a basketball player," Indiana coach Jim O'Brien said. "Danny really stormed onto the scene and improved at a level that was astounding."

Stoudemire, Yao, Bryant, Duncan and Chris Paul of the Hornets were voted by fans to start for the West. The East starters are Garnett, Howard, Dwyane Wade, Allen Iverson of the Pistons and LeBron James of the Cavaliers.

Coaches were then required to vote for two guards, two forwards, a center and two at-large reserves. The other picks for the West were Pau Gasol of the Lakers, Tony Parker of the Spurs, Brandon Roy of the Trail Blazers and David West of the Hornets. Filling out the East roster are Raptors forward Chris Bosh and Hawks guard Joe Johnson.

There was little controversy in fan voting—besides Stoudemire beating out Spurs reserve Bruce Bowen by just 68,000 votes—but the ballots turned in by the league's coaches left a bunch of deserving players with a gripe.

Allen was passed over despite averaging 18.0 points and helping Boston to a 38-9 record. The eight-time All-Star was skipped over last year, too, but was later added by commissioner David Stern as an injury replacement for Caron Butler.

Deron Williams and Paul Millsap of the Jazz also were left off the rosters. So were the Suns' Steve Nash, a six-time All-Star, Mo Williams of the East-leading Cavaliers, Antawn Jamison of the Wizards and Al Jefferson of the Timberwolves.

Man guilty of false report in Harrison gun case

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—A Philadelphia man who says he was shot by Indianapolis Colts receiver Marvin Harrison has been convicted of a misdemeanor for giving police false information about the incident.

The April 28 shooting occurred near Harrison's car wash in North Philadelphia. Investigators said the shots came from a gun owned by Harrison, but said they have conflicting accounts of who fired it.

Dwight Dixon said he will appeal Tuesday's misdemeanor conviction for filing a fictitious report. Police said he initially gave them a fake name and told them two unknown men shot him during a robbery attempt.

The judge dismissed two related misdemeanor counts. Dixon later said Harrison was the shooter and filed a civil suit filed against the NFL player.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	38	9	.809	_
Philadelphia	22	22	.500	14 1 / 2
New York	20	25	.444	17
New Jersey	20	26	.435	17 1 / 2
Toronto	19	28	.404	19

Southeast Division

Orlando	35	10	.778	_
Atlanta	26	19	.578	9
Miami	25	19	.568	9 1 / 2
Charlotte	19	27	.413	16 1 / 2
Washington	9	36	.200	26

Central Division

Cleveland	35	9	.795	_
Detroit	25	19	.568	10
Milwaukee	22	27	.449	15 1 / 2
Chicago	19	27	.413	17
Indiana	18	28	.391	18

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	31	14	.689	_
New Orleans	28	14	.667	1 1 / 2
Houston	28	19	.596	4
Dallas	26	19	.578	5
Memphis	11	34	.244	20

Northwest Division

Denver	30	16	.652	_
Portland	28	17	.622	1 1 / 2
Utah	25	21	.543	5
Minnesota	16	28	.364	13
Oklahoma City	11	35	.239	19

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	35	9	.795	_
Phoenix	25	19	.568	10
Golden State	14	32	.304	22
L.A. Clippers	10	35	.222	25 1 / 2
Sacramento	10	37	.213	26 1 / 2

Thursday's Games

Orlando 99, Cleveland 88
San Antonio 114, Phoenix 104

FBR OPEN SCORES

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona (AP)–Scores Thursday from the FBR Open, a $6 million US PGA Tour event at 7,216-yard par-71 TPC Scottsdale:

FIRST ROUND

James Nitties	31-34	65
Lucas Glover	32-33	65
David Berganio, Jr.	34-32	66
Charley Hoffman	33-33	66
Briny Baird	32-35	67
Kevin Na	33-34	67
Matt Kuchar	33-34	67
Cliff Kresge	33-35	68
Bubba Watson	34-34	68
Jonathan Kaye	35-33	68
George McNeill	35-33	68
Cameron Beckman	33-35	68
John Senden	33-35	68
Webb Simpson	35-33	68
Brad Adamonis	33-35	68
Rocco Mediate	33-35	68
Brian Gay	33-35	68
D.J. Trahan	34-34	68
Parker McLachlin	36-32	68
Kevin Sutherland	34-34	68
Jason Gore	34-35	69
Vaughn Taylor	35-34	69
Aaron Baddeley	37-32	69
Pat Perez	34-35	69
Brett Quigley	33-36	69
Heath Slocum	31-38	69
Scott Piercy	36-33	69
Ryan Moore	34-35	69
David Toms	33-36	69
Steve Flesch	37-32	69
Woody Austin	32-37	69
Sean O'Hair	35-34	69
J.J. Henry	34-35	69
Dean Wilson	35-34	69
Michael Allen	36-34	70
Michael Letzig	34-36	70
Paul Azinger	37-33	70
Stephen Ames	36-34	70
Geoff Ogilvy	33-37	70
Mark Wilson	34-36	70
Kirk Triplett	34-36	70
Tim Wilkinson	36-34	70
Troy Matteson	36-34	70
Scott McCarron	36-34	70
Steve Elkington	33-37	70
Jeff Maggert	37-33	70
J.B. Holmes	39-31	70
Chad Campbell	36-34	70
Justin Leonard	34-36	70
Nick Watney	36-34	70
Mathew Goggin	38-32	70
Jason Bohn	35-36	71
Bo Van Pelt	37-34	71
Carl Pettersson	38-33	71
Steve Lowery	33-38	71
Brian Bateman	38-33	71
Chris Couch	37-34	71
Tim Herron	34-37	71
Dudley Hart	36-35	71
Jarrod Lyle	37-34	71
Ted Purdy	36-35	71
Alex Cejka	35-36	71
Jerry Kelly	35-36	71
John Rollins	37-34	71
Zach Johnson	36-35	71
Ben Curtis	35-36	71
Joe Ogilvie	35-36	71
Charles Howell III	34-37	71
Tim Petrovic	36-35	71
Bob Tway	35-36	71
Brandt Jobe	34-38	72
Camilo Villegas	37-35	72
Brandt Snedeker	38-34	72
Rory Sabbatini	34-38	72
Wes Short, Jr.	35-37	72
Dustin Johnson	37-35	72
John Merrick	34-38	72
Fredrik Jacobson	37-35	72
Rod Pampling	38-34	72
Kenny Perry	38-34	72
Jonathan Byrd	36-36	72
Nicholas Thompson	40-32	72
John Mallinger	36-36	72
Tommy Armour III	37-35	72
Brian Davis	35-38	73
Kevin Streelman	34-39	73
Nathan Green	38-35	73
Mike Weir	37-36	73
Hunter Mahan	36-37	73
Chris DiMarco	36-37	73
Scott Verplank	36-37	73
Arron Oberholser	38-35	73
Harrison Frazar	35-38	73
Rickie Fowler	35-38	73
Steve Marino	36-37	73
Anthony Kim	39-34	73
Stewart Cink	35-38	73
Chez Reavie	32-41	73
Ryan Palmer	36-37	73
Martin Laird	35-38	73
Peter Lonard	39-34	73
Bill Haas	38-36	74
Steve Stricker	38-36	74
Mark Calcavecchia	36-38	74
Tom Lehman	36-38	74
Fred Couples	36-38	74
Ben Crane	36-38	74
Todd Hamilton	38-36	74
Matt Bettencourt	37-37	74
Jesper Parnevik	37-38	75
Ryuji Imada	37-38	75
Marc Turnesa	40-35	75
Stuart Appleby	36-40	76
Johnson Wagner	36-40	76
Ken Duke	40-36	76
Luke Donald	38-38	76
Phil Mickelson	39-37	76
Eric Axley	38-39	77
Billy Mayfair	38-39	77
Dean Vomacka	38-39	77
David Duval	41-36	77
Daniel Chopra	36-42	78
Angel Cabrera	43-36	79
Brendon de Jonge	33-DNF	
Jeff Overton	35-DNF	
Gary Woodland	36-DNF	
Jeff Quinney	36-DNF	
Charlie Wi	36-DNF	
Jeff Klauk	37-DNF	
Derek Fathauer	37-DNF	
Tom Kalinowski	38-DNF	
Scott Hebert	38-DNF	

By The Associated Press

'09 TOUR

From Page 28

ners male and female expert get to take home $300 and medal for first place, $200 and a medal for second, and $100 and a medal for third;

■ Guam stage overall winners—Top 3 male and female expert—gets $300 and medal for first place, $200 and a medal for second, and $100 and a medal for third;

■ The Tour De Marianas Top 3—male and female expert—get $500 and a trophy for first, $300 and a trophy for second, and $200 and a trophy for third; and

■ Top 3 for expert, novice, and mountain bike categories also will win trophies or medals.

Entry fee for stages 1 and 2 is $35 and $60 for stages 1 to 4.

Those who prefer to compete in one stage need to fork over $25.

For more information, contact Saipan race organizers Alex Goson at 235-5963 or Ronald Villafria at 483-2388.

Guam race organizers are Johan Sobredo at 1-671-688-8836 and Jazy/Mylene Garcia at 1-671-637-4347.

Saipan's Super Bowl picks

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTERS

Monday will be an unofficial holiday for schools and government offices not only in the mainland U.S. but the CNMI as well.

The reason: Super Bowl XLII, baby!

Will the Pittsburgh Steelers make history and become the winingest team in Super Bowl history (it's currently tied with the San Francisco 49ers and Dallas Cowboys with five apiece) or will the Arizona Cardinals' Cinderella story continue?

Despite being thousands of miles away from the heart of the action in Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Florida, local pigskin prognosticators still want their voices heard.

I will be cheering for the Arizona Cardinals. I like cheering for the underdogs. The Cardinals have never won a championship and have suffered through many years of being the doormat of the NFC. I am also pulling for Kurt Warner the QB that was with the Rams before and won a Super Bowl. He was written off by several teams and now is leading his new team to the Super Bowl. It's a great comeback story. My prediction is: Cardinals 24, Steelers 17.

Russ Quinn
President, Northern Mariana Islands Triathlon Federation

I don't religiously follow the football series but I am rooting for the Cardinals this year because they are the underdogs and I like that they made it this far. The Steelers have the best defense so we'll just have to wait and see.

Cuki Alvarez
President/promoter Trench Tech, Inc.

I am rooting for the Steelers as I believe this season they have what it takes to win. I will be watching them.

Charlotte Tenepere
SEDA/SBA League Secretary

I am from the West Coast, so I am rooting for the Cardinals. I always go for my hometown team, when the Steelers played the Ravens, I went for the Ravens.

James Feger
Rocball creator/Mt. Carmel teacher

I picked the team with the experience, so I go for the Steelers. Experience plays a big factor in big games.

Omar Ajoste
Assistant coach, Southern Sonics

I go for the Steelers. They are a solid team, both on offense and defense.

Lalaine Pagarao
Member, MHS girls basketball team

I am a big fan of football and I will go for the Cardinals because they are the underdogs in this Super Bowl.

Ben Lisua
Marshall, Judicial Branch

I don't have any football team because my sport is hockey but I will watch the second half of at lunchtime. May the best team win the Super Bowl.

David Wiseman
Associate Judge, Superior Court

I'll go for the Cardinals because they are the underdogs. The Steelers played in the Super Bowl many times but I always like to support the underdog team. The Cardinals went through difficult situations just to be able to reach the Superbowl.

Donald Flores
Pitcher, Joeten Motors Jets

I think Pittsburg is the stronger team and the players are very experienced compared to the younger players of Arizona. I like the Steelers' Samoan star Troy Polamalu.

Luis Villagomez
Deputy clerk, Superior Court

I'll go for the Cardinals. They are the underdogs. But they have Kurt Warner (a quarterback playing with jersey #13, 11th season, Northern Iowa who came from Arena League and NFL Europe to lead St. Louis Rams to 2000 Super Bowl).

Tim Wesley
Center/forward, Autonomous basketball team

STEELERS

From Page 28

This year, the win goes to the wicked.

The Steelers not only win, they win big, fracturing the fairy tale with countless forearms, knocking destiny on its duff.

Leading the conference in passer rating and leading the league in praise quotes, Warner is the Super Bowl's annual heartwarming star.

Leading the league in defense, the Steelers are the Super Bowl's annual unruly mob.

Once the game begins, feel-good won't have a chance against hit-hard.

It hasn't for, oh, XLII years.

"You know," Steelers safety Ryan Clark said with an odd grin. "we've been kind of thinking that ourselves."

■ ■ ■

Kurt Warner is Oprah.

He stepped off the plane from Arizona here wearing a perfectly pressed suit. He will step to the postgame interview podium carrying a well-worn Bible.

"It's fun, it's gratifying," he said.

The Steelers are Jerry Springer.

They stepped off the plane in baggy sweats. They have conducted interviews with wrinkled shirts and visors on backward.

"It's not about fun, it's about winning," barked running back Willie Parker.

From the moment he became one of the few 37-year-olds to steal a job from a former first-round draft pick—Matt Leinart—Warner has a been a blast.

Nearly a decade after winning a Super Bowl with the St. Louis Rams—and after being benched four times for three teams in the interim—the openly devout old guy has become, well, reborn.

He was given two of the league's best receivers in Larry Fitzgerald and Anquan Boldin. He was given former Steelers offensive guru Ken Whisenhunt.

Then, at the start of the playoffs, he was given rested standout running Edgerrin James.

And, oh yeah, through it all, Kurt Warner was also given this huge chip.

"I think the perception around the league about me was that I couldn't play anymore," he said this week.

The nicest of guys couldn't help but mimic his critics: " 'There was no more football left in him, and he's basically just trying to survive' ."

He said the league thought he was another Emmitt Smith, going to Arizona to quietly end his career: " `The Cardinals won't win, Kurt Warner can't really play, so I guess it's a fine mix.'"

Then the playoffs began, and three upsets later, the story just got better.

"I think they knew something that a lot of people didn't, or took a chance on something that a lot of people wouldn't," Warner said of the Cardinals. "So that's been one of the neat parts of the story; they took a chance, I took a chance, and together, we've made something special happen."

Until now.

With the Steelers bearing down, Warner's story Sunday will be special only in a red-light sort of way, his value lessening with each hit.

"And when you hit people in a timing offense like Arizona's, it can throw everything off," Clark said.

The Steelers will hit them, first, with numbers.

Warner lead the NFC with a 96.9 passer rating? The Steelers ranked second in the league by allowing only a 63.4 passer rating.

Warner had seven games of at least 300 yards passing? The Steelers gave up zero 300-yard passing games.

Warner always seemed to slip out of trouble, avoiding both sacks and interceptions? The Steelers led the league in combined sacks and picks,

"We think they're going to try to spread it out on us, but that's fine," Clark said. "That means that we'll have our pass rushers going one-on-one against some of their offensive lineman. We like that matchup."

Led by defensive player of the year linebacker James Harrison, the Steelers' defense ranked second in the league with 51 sacks. The Cardinals' offensive line hasn't seen this big, this quick, this many.

If Warner avoids the pain, his receivers won't, the Steelers allowing a league-best five yards per passing attempt, and only four 100-yard receivers all season.

"Playing tough is what we do, it's who we are," Steeler linebacker James Farrior said. "When you hit people like we hit people, everything changes."

Comebacks change. Fables change. Destiny changes.

To Warner's happy promise that he would buy his family a puppy if he wins this Super Bowl, the hardened Steelers will have but one loud, long, answer.

Dog gone.

Saipan's Super Bowl picks

Monday will be an unofficial holiday for schools and government offices not only in the mainland U.S. but the CNMI as well. **27**

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Federer beats Roddick to reach final

Roger Federer moved within one victory of his 14th Grand Slam title with another dominating victory, ousting Andy Roddick 6-2, 7-5, 7-5 Thursday to reach the Australian Open final. **25**

'09 Tour De Marianas, Jazy Cup all set

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Preparations are now underway for the 2009 Tour De Marianas and Annual Jazy Cup cycling tournament with the first two stages to be held on Saipan on Feb. 21-22.

This year's race will be sponsored by TakeCare and sanctioned by the Jazy Garcia Sports Foundation.

It would be the second year that the Tour De Marianas is held, while the Jazy Cup is now on its eighth year.

A strong field of Guam riders dominated the race last year here on Saipan with Joseph Husslein and Chiyo Grabrille Lombard winning the overall expert male and female divisions, respectively.

The first stage of the race on Feb. 21 will be the individual time trials with a distance of 7.5 kilometers, covering the course from Marianas Country Club to the Hill Top of Suicide Cliff.

This race will be opened for expert, novice and mountain bike categories.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Participants of the 2008 Tour De Marianas and 7th Jazy Cup in action on one of the roads of Saipan.

Stage 2 will be Feb. 22 for the road race starting at the American Memorial Park with a distance of 67 km. for the expert class, and 33.5 km. for the novice and mountain bike categories.

Application forms are now available at Romy's Bike Shop and Auto Glass Pro.

The other two stages of the tournament will be held in Guam in March.

The third stage will be on March 14 with a distance of 76 km. for the expert class, 52 km. for novice, and 26 km. for mountain bike, covering the course from Ace Hardware Yigo via scenic locations on Guam and back.

And on March 15, stage 2 will start and finish at the Agana Shopping Center. This race covers a distance of 60 km. for the expert division and 34 km. for novice and mountain bike races.

Interested competitors may now get application forms at the Hornet Sporting Goods. Prizes for this year's event are the following:

■ Saipan stage overall win-

See '09 TOUR on Page 27

Tsunami Saipan, ARC begin swim lessons Feb. 14

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The swim lessons offered by Tsunami Swimming Center Saipan and American Red Cross-NMI Chapter will return next month with another five Saturday sessions.

But this time, the swim lessons will take place at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi. The previous Tsunami Saipan-ARC swim lessons were held at the pools of Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

The first sessions of the swim lesson is set for Feb. 14. The next four will be held on Feb. 21, Feb. 28, March 14, and March 21.

Coaches and members of Tsunami Saipan team will be conducting the five sessions of swim lessons, while water safety instructors and lifesaver-certified swimmers from American Red Cross will join Tsunami Saipan in providing valuable lessons to participants.

Registration will be held on Feb. 14 from 9:30am to 10am. Sessions will run from 10am to 11am.

Registration fee is $30 per participant. For families, the second and succeeding members will pay only $25 each.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tsunami Saipan swimmers are seen in this photo taken during last season's heptathlon meet at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi, which will be the venue of next month's swim lessons.

Tsunami Saipan and ARC held the last swim lessons of 2008 in October with 55 enrollees finishing the sessions and getting certifications from the American Red Cross-NMI Chapter.

The participants took lessons from Bobby and Tami Winkfield, Stan Good, Mike Villagomez, Rezne Wong, Shin, Hiro, and Kensuke Kimura, Cooper Graf, Kai Staal, Val Welch, Amanda Johnson, Karen Buettner, Marystar Welch, Annie Camacho, Mina Minami, Thea Minor, Kiana Villagomez, and Ashley and Salofi Welch, and from eight water safety instructors and four lifesaver-certified swimmers from ARC.

Besides teaching kids and adults the basic of swimming, Tsunami Saipan is holding swim lessons to bring their swimmers closer to the community, especially to aspiring kid swimmers

The club is also using the swim lessons to raise funds for purchase of equipment, for sending Tsunami Saipan swimmers to off-island competitions, and for monthly fees at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool.

For more information or to register, contact Yuko Kimura at tsunamisaipan@yahoo.co.mp.

By BILL PLASCHKE
(c) 2009, Los Angeles Times

Steelers' D won't let Cardinal QB enjoy a fairy-tale ending

The fairy tale is that, if he wins Sunday, the Arizona Cardinals quarterback has promised to buy his family a puppy.

The reality show is that the Pittsburgh Steelers are going to whip the dog out of him.

The fairy tale is that, while dining with his family every Friday night before home games, the Arizona Cardinals quarterback picks up a stranger's bill.

The reality show is that the Pittsburgh Steelers are going to cash him out.

The fairy tale is that, for the second time in a bungee-jump of a career, Kurt Warner will finish work Sunday as the sweetest of Super Bowl heroes.

The reality show is that the Pittsburgh Steelers will make him melt in their mouthpieces.

Amid the grandeur of Big Ben, the edge of Edge and the brass of The Boss, this is a Super Bowl of two inexorably connected stories.

One is Warner, a deeply religious and righteous man who is trying to complete a career comeback out of a Kevin Costner movie.

The other is the Steelers defense, a deeply nasty and noxious group who wants to hit him with a load of Eastwood.

Two stories, one ending, and, take it from me, it's not going to be pretty.

Last year, before the game, in this space, I gave you the New York Giants as your Cinderella Super Bowl champs.

See STEELERS on Page 27